



MARRIED MONEY

by
HARFORD
POWELL

HARFORD POWEL, Jr.

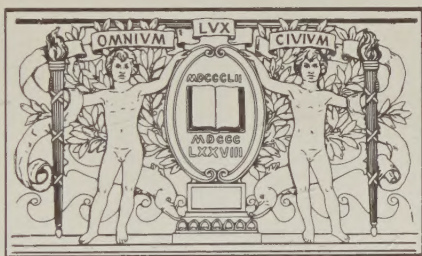
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WALTER CAMP

THE VIRGIN QUEENE

MARRIED MONEY

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An Atlantic Monthly Press Book

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MARRIED MONEY

I

A GENTLEMAN FROM NEW JERSEY

"I CAN'T bear to see a Bostonian marrying out of Boston. Dear papa always used to say that foreign marriages never turn out happily."

Mrs. Joshua Easeman sighed, and pointed with her umbrella at an aged Pope-Hartford touring car that was rattling its way down the street, with huge clouds of kerosene smoke coming from its exhaust. Seldom is the passing of such a dilapidated car a matter of burning interest to the bystanders. But the street was Beacon, and the city was Boston, and it was no wonder that Mrs. Easeman looked hard at Wee Legg, who drove the car, and at Jerry McCoy, the enormous young man who sat beside her.

Spying her old friend, Colonel Thomas Truman Shackley, across the street, Mrs. Easeman trotted nimbly over to share her anxieties with him.

Colonel Shackley was walking slowly home from his club, favoring the leg that had been broken by a gray-clad sharpshooter at Antietam. He wore a black slouch hat, a frock coat with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor in its buttonhole, gray striped

trousers, and brown sneakers. His friends and relatives had long since ceased to notice the sneakers, knowing that an elderly celebrity who can afford the best bootmaker in the world can also afford to wear any footgear that he chooses.

"That was our dear Wee Legg who just drove by," said Mrs. Easeman. "It is the fourth afternoon that she has taken that young man driving just at this time. There is something in it, I'm sure."

"Something in what?" asked the Colonel. Despite his eighty-seven years, he offered his arm gallantly to his almost equally venerable friend.

"Wee Legg has never looked twice at any young man," said Mrs. Easeman. "Most of us thought she would follow the example of so many well-bred Boston girls, and remain single. But along comes this enormous young man, Jerry McCoy, and it almost looks as if she were showing him off to us."

"Did you say he's a foreigner?"

"He comes from New Brunswick, New Jersey."

"Then he's not foreign. New Jersey is not far away from Boston."

"Spiritually, it is a million miles away."

Mrs. Easeman nodded her head with such force that all the ostrich tips in her bonnet quivered like ferns in a gale.

"I have never been to New Brunswick," she went on, "and it may still be a delightful old city, full of well-connected people. But I doubt it,

True. All the other cities have decayed so sadly. Philadelphia reeks with the smoke of its factories, and all the best families have been driven far out of town. Baltimore is no better, and we all know to what a pass New York has come. Dear papa always foretold its fate. I popped over last week for Addie Brownell's funeral, and the crowds on the streets are like the people we used to shudder at in Cairo and Constantinople. Why don't you give the Atlantic Monthly a paper on the degradation of New York?"

"I'm not writing papers for the magazines any more," said Colonel Shackley. "Only a sonnet, from time to time, for the Century. Here is your house, Martha. Good afternoon, my dear."

"Won't you come in? It's raw and cold, and I will give you tea."

He hesitated, and then followed her into her drawing-room, cluttered with the loot of three centuries.

"I keep good fires going, to drive out the damp," she said. "Dear papa used to say that it is n't safe to put out the furnace in Boston until the Fourth of July."

"I've heard him say that," said the Colonel. "But you were speaking about Wee Legg. How time flies! It seems only yesterday I used to flirt with her in her baby carriage, in the Public Garden. Tell me about this young man of hers. He looks strong and well grown."

"I hear," said Mrs. Easeman, solemnly, "that he has all his clothes made to order, because his feet won't pass through the trousers of ready-made suits. He was a famous athlete at Harvard, True. Wee has never encouraged any young man before — not since she was a bud, four years ago."

"I was at Taormina that winter. Did Roger Legg give her a ball?"

"Only a tea," said Mrs. Easeman, with the ghost of a sniff. "But she was the sweetest and prettiest bud of her year."

"I believe it," said the Colonel. "Her father and mother were popular. Pick may have been a scapegrace, but he had charm. It seems as if a pestilence had carried off the Leggs. All dead now, except old Roger. Time flies!"

"I've been going to Legg funerals all my life," agreed the lady. "There is heart trouble in that family, True. Wee's grandfather and great-grandfather were comparatively young men when they died, and dear papa always said that the original Leggs were sickly people who seldom lived to eighty or even seventy years."

"Tell me more about this young Irishman of Wee's," asked Colonel Shackley. "Maybe he'll put some needed stamina into the family. You were talking about him, Martha, not climbing the Legg family tree."

"But family trees are so fascinating! I can't

find out much about the McCoys of New Brunswick. This boy's father is said to be abroad."

Mrs. Easeman took the New York Social Register from her superb knee-hole desk.

"The boy is always called Jerry, but I learn to my surprise that the first name is Jeroboam, and not the common Irish Jeremiah. Does n't the name Jeroboam suggest Puritan blood, True?"

"Possibly," said the Colonel. "There was an excellent Jeroboam in the Bible, who regained much lost territory, including Damascus."

"How wonderful your mind is! You are never at a loss for a fact or a reference."

She smiled at him affectionately, and gave him another cup of her Lapsang Suchong tea.

"The Social Register means nothing, nowadays," she said. "Such incredible people get their names in it! But I'm glad to see that Jeroboam's mother was one of the Neilsons of Stuyvesant Square. If I had n't discovered that, I should consider it my duty to warn Roger Legg."

"I think," said the Colonel, dryly, "that the glories of Stuyvesant Square have departed. As you say, New York has changed. But people regard the changes as progress. The erection of a tradesman's shop on the site of an Astor or Vanderbilt residence is considered a glory to the community."

"But Boston is still Boston," said Mrs. Easeman.

"Boston," said the Colonel, in the kind tone of

an eighteenth-century gentleman explaining something to a little child, "is the American Pompeii. Our effort is to keep things as they were. Boston drowns on her hilltop and in her reclaimed swamp, taking a proper antiquarian pride in her rusting railways and her rotting wharves. New York is El Dorado. Any longshoreman in New York can aspire to prodigious wealth to-morrow. One day an immigrant comes barefooted down the gang-plank; the next day he invites you to his box at the opera. And you go, Martha. You are exceedingly glad to eat his pheasant and drink his champagne. That is progress. That is the triumph of democracy. In Boston we inherit money and nurse it all our lives. In New York they make money by the barrel, and throw it away just as gorgeously. Convince yourself, Martha, that New Yorkers understand the art of living far better than we Bostonians do."

"If you joke like that any more," said Mrs. Easeman, indignantly, "I shall convince myself that you should be under restraint."

Colonel Shackley laughed, and took his hat up from the floor.

"I must fly!" he said, rising stiffly to his feet. "You're a most ineluctable woman, Martha — hard to escape from! Let's hope that Boston will always be Boston, and that Wee will marry some young sobersides who will be worthy of her in every way."

"And not this common young man from New Jersey," said Mrs. Easeman. "I'm deeply worried about Wee. She's so fine, so good. She is just as sweet as if she had stepped down from the frame of a family portrait. The modern spirit of extravagance and bad manners has n't touched her, True. She has been brought up so simply. Her automobile cost less than a hundred dollars, and it uses kerosene and not gasoline."

"While Roger Legg lives, she won't drive a better one," said the Colonel, shrewdly. "Good-bye, Martha, my dear."

She detained his hand. "I wish Wee would pick out a Boston man," she said, "like Caleb Spinney, for instance."

"Caleb's my grandnephew," said the Colonel. "A cut-and-dried young chap who'll never set the Charles River afire. But capable—capable."

"I'm sure Wee will behave properly," said Mrs. Easeman, addressing her visitor's retreating coat tails. "She's to be trusted. She's not one of the flibbertigibbet young girls who allow common young men to take liberties. Come soon again, dear True."

Twenty miles from the scene of this conversation, in a quiet lane near Concord, Wee Legg disentangled herself from Jerry McCoy's arms and said:—

"Jerry, I *know* you've broken my favorite rib."

"God, woman, can't you stand a little pain?"

She pressed her nose deeply into his shabby coon-skin overcoat, enjoying its mingled odor of tobacco and fur. They were still sitting in the dilapidated touring car, of an almost forgotten make; but it was now buried so deeply in thick bushes and overhanging branches that its battered body could not have been seen by an observer ten feet away.

There was a great clamor of frogs from the marsh in front of them, and beyond the marsh the Concord River meandered in great loops toward the bridge. At the bridge, no doubt, parties of motor trippers were reading in the living stone or monumental bronze about the shot heard round the world. But nobody heard Jerry and Wee, and nobody saw them except a tiny rabbit, born so early in the spring that it looked as if it wanted to be picked up and warmed.

This was the fourth afternoon that Jerry and Wee had explored the roads and lanes around Concord. But things had gone differently this time. At the Battle Green in Lexington Wee's right hand had dropped from the steering wheel, and Jerry had shyly covered it with his left. In front of the Old Manse, the fingers of those two hands had been tightly intertwined. And now, in the cool green privacy of this disused lane, Jerry and Wee were locked in each other's arms.

One imagines, nowadays, that young people are

only too well accustomed to such scenes, and that it is their constant habit to embrace each other as violently as sailors grapple with their sweethearts on the benches of the park. Middle-aged persons, inflamed by too much reading of our younger novelists, presume that this love-making is part of the normal routine of life; and we may wish them joy of the presumption. As a matter of fact, neither Jerry nor Wee had ever been through such a scene before.

It left them gasping and dazed. Wee's hands and feet slowly turned to ice. They tried at first, by speaking with their usual flippancy, to make light of this great new wave of emotion, but it would not grow light.

"I love you," Jerry whispered, and there was something in his deep, husky murmur that told her he was speaking true. Womanlike, Wee was bewitched by the joy of the moment. Manlike, Jerry was already beginning to count the cost.

His mind, even in the thick of the embrace, wavered from one thought to another. He was earning his own living none too well. What right had he to ask this impoverished girl to marry him? She was not a pauper, of course. She had a car—but what a car! She lived with her old aunt in one of those hideous little brick houses with mansard roofs on Marlboro Street. She dressed plainly. Could he give her a decent home, good-looking

clothes? A more vital thought stabbed him. What about children? Big families are modish in Boston. He almost groaned aloud as he conjured up a vision of a large and ragged brood.

"Jerry," he said to himself, "you've got to sit up and tell this girl you can't see this thing through."

But he did n't. He crushed her with his arms, and she smiled up at him. She had wondered, for a second, if she ought to abandon herself so frankly. It was n't Puritan. It was n't Back Bay. But something told her, deep inside, that it *was* aristocratic, and that only a peasant tries to disguise emotion when the emotion is honorable and fine. She pushed his face away, and looked at him with her black eyes dancing. He had flung off his hat and his hair was standing on end. No matter how disheveled, Jerry McCoy was something to see. She loved his blue eyes, set so far apart, and his square-cut jaw. He looked like what he was—a man covered with all the laurels Harvard reserves for her athletic and well-born sons.

"I love you," she said. "It makes me feel very queer. When you kiss me I feel as if I were being hugged by a grizzly bear; and in between times I feel as if there were a knife stuck through my heart, so I can't breathe. I thought love was a gentle and friendly sort of thing."

"Gentle and friendly! My God!"

"Those words don't quite fit," admitted Wee.

"I knew more about love than you did," he said. "But I thought it made people sad and depressed, and gave them such awful stomach-aches they could n't eat their food. You ought to have seen the lunch I ate to-day! I feel as strong as a bear."

"A grizzly bear," said Wee. "That's what I'm going to call you. You're such a shaggy old thing."

"Shaggy!" Jerry's tone was aggrieved. "I'm the very picture of a snappy young banker and bond peddler. I get all my clothes in New York and have my hair cut there, when possible. I study the movies, and try to combine the virility of John Gilbert with the well-oiled surface of Adolphe Menjou. And you call me a shaggy old thing!"

"Grizzly!" she repeated, stroking the furry back of his wrist.

"All right for you," said Jerry. "What am I going to call you?"

"My name is Wee."

"No, it is n't. That's a damnable nickname that was wished on you in the nursery—and you're a big girl now. I've looked you up in the Social Register to see if you're sufficiently fashionable to marry the heir to all the McCoys, and your name is C. Lowell Legg. What does the C stand for?"

"That," said Wee, "is one of the things you shall never know."

"But I can't marry a girl and not know what her first name is! It is n't done."

"Well, it's going to be done," said Wee. She laughed, and then she felt Jerry's arms around her, and had no breath to laugh more. They clung together. The baby rabbit stared at them in placid incomprehension from the lane.

Jerry's mind was not wavering now. A comforting word had come into it. Why had fate allowed him to work for four years in Boston, in the bond department of Carr & Daland? There had been other offers; a chance to go to China for a great oil company, a chance to enter the "banking school" of the Federal Union Trust Company in New York, even the ghost of a hint that he would be welcomed by the lordliest bank of all. He had put all these aside, and had gone to work for Mr. Perkins Daland, his father's friend. Kismet! If he had n't made that strange choice, if he had n't met Wee Legg from time to time at dinners and dances, the dark road of destiny would never have led him into this.

Into this! He looked at Wee's small, sleek head. What a patrician nose she had, as straight as if it had been ruled with a draughtsman's pen. He looked at her tiny ear, set so flatly against her head, and he caressed her cold, slim-fingered hand, buried in his own great paw. He felt that great waves of charm spread outward all around her. She had lived with old people; she needed sympathy and love from a man of her own age. And what a return

she would make for it! His doubts died. He knew he was gaining strength from this subtle fusing of their personalities, their souls. She was one of those dream girls a man meets so often in legends, so seldom in life; a girl who can bring out all the fire and energy in a man, all the inner powers that will bring the world to his feet.

"We are wonderfully alone, in this lane," said Wee.

"Have n't you ever been wonderfully alone before?"

"Not with a man. Yes, I have—once. With Caleb Spinney, your boss at Carr & Daland. We were lost all day in the fog off Marblehead. It was even more private than this lane."

"How old were you?"

"Seventeen," said Wee. "He was teaching me to sail."

"Caleb is sufficiently chaperoned by his face," remarked Jerry, without jealousy.

"By his character, too," said Wee. "He is the most thoroughly good young man I know."

"Do you like good young men?"

"In their place."

"This is n't their place."

"Did I call *you* good?"

She laughed, and then lay quietly in his arms till the sun sank. At last she sat up, full of energy.

"It's time to make a few plans," she said.

"They're all made," said Jerry. "Early this afternoon I mentioned marriage and you thought well of it. All we need is a floral arch, and the wedding march, and a few drunken reprobates for ushers, and some absolutely beautiful girls for bridesmaids. I wish I did n't have to go through life with a woman who uses an alias."

"Your own name is extremely queer. Who gave it to you?"

"My sponsors in baptism, wherein I was made a child of God—" began Jerry, glibly.

"And my sponsors gave me my name," sighed Wee. "Two unmarried aunts, who are both dead, and Uncle Jonas, who is dead too. There are two historic Puritan names for girls in the Legg family. One of them is Free Love, and the other is mine."

"If it's like the fine old Puritan handle you've just mentioned, I wish you'd keep it dark."

"I'm going to," said Wee.

He kissed her, more gently this time.

"Grizzly," said Wee, "when you brought up the topic of marriage, you said you had loved me for a long time."

"Since earliest youth. You see, I have always had an ideal girl in my mind, and it's been just a question of catching up with her. Somebody about five feet three inches, with hair as black as ink, and extremely pretty—in fact, the prettiest girl who ever lived."

"You like making catalogues, don't you?" said Wee. "Later you'll have time to remember that you wanted somebody with six toes on her left foot. Just now you must help me make plans."

"What sort of plans?"

"For the future," said Wee. Her voice was firm. "You have been kind enough to propose to me—"

"Kind enough? I absolutely could n't help it."

"It was sweet of you," she said seriously. "I'm not like you. I did n't make up an imaginary somebody to love. I have loved *you* such a long time."

"You have loved *me*?"

"For years and years." She nodded her head four times. "It began at the Nuttages' ball, the year I came out. You were introduced to me, and you said you liked my pink frock."

For the first time that day he looked at her frock, and it was pink.

"This is n't the same one," said Wee. "But I've worn pink ever since. Jerry, I used to go to football games just to see you play. And I went to New London three times on yachts belonging to people who bore me, just to see you row. And all that time you were so awfully cold to me. You would scarcely speak."

"I like that!" exclaimed Jerry. "What could I do, during the races? Bow to you, as we rowed past the yacht?"

"You beat Yale by three lengths in your senior year," said Wee. "You could easily have spared a few seconds for a bow."

"And Yale trimmed us by six lengths the year before," said Jerry. "It could n't have made things any worse if I'd kissed my hand to you, and called out 'Yoo-hoo!'"

"It would have made me much happier if you had."

"You're ridiculous," Jerry said. "I'd much rather kiss you than my hand. Let's spend every afternoon this way, and never mind your old plans."

"I see you need constant management," said Wee. "I'll begin by taking you out of here."

She backed the aged touring car expertly out of the lane, and drove it carefully down an almost equally bumpy road toward the highway.

"There are all kinds of things that must be done," she said. "There are many people we must tell about this, before the formal announcement in the Herald and Transcript. My own family is rather complicated, in a way. A lot of people are tremendously interested, Jerry. I suppose you did n't know we were being stared at this afternoon."

"By a bunny," Jerry said. "A little baby rabbit—and he's welcome."

"Ah, not here," said Wee. "On Beacon Street. Jerry, you'd be surprised if I told you that at least fifty people noticed us, and have surely been talking

about us. Boston simply adores a love affair. Old Mrs. Easeman and Colonel Shackley—and Mrs. Ammi Nuttage, in her bow window. She's stone deaf, but she knows everything. And Molly Doggett, and Cousin Lizzie Skillings, and ever so many others."

"They can go and bite themselves to death," said Jerry, ungraciously. "What does it prove, anyway?"

"That we are becoming News—News with a capital N."

"Well, we're engaged, aren't we?"

"Certainly *not*."

"Disgraceful!" said Jerry. "I thought all this petting and necking were entirely legitimate, but if you've only been trifling with me I'll speak severely to your Aunt Caroline."

"We are n't engaged," said Wee. "We have what is known as an understanding. Until you have seen Uncle Roger we can't tell anybody."

"Can't we?" asked Jerry, looking around in the dusk.

A squint-eyed farm boy came shuffling toward them down the lane, with a string of very dead, very dusty fish in his hand.

"Yea, bo!" called Jerry, and gave an ear-splitting whistle. "I want to announce to you that this young lady and I are engaged!"

II

A LADY FROM THE BACK BAY

THE farm boy gave Jerry an unclean look.

"Give 'er a squeeze," he advised, and spat copiously on the running board of the car.

"Now that we've been so nicely congratulated," said Wee, "suppose we find a place to eat."

"Would it be proper to take a lady who is n't engaged to dine at the Concord Inn?"

"Absolutely not," said Wee. "And we can't go to my house, because we have only one servant and she is rather old. I told her not to expect me. So we'll find a roadside place somewhere."

"Disgusting," groaned Jerry. "I'd like to take you to Ciro's, or Sherry's, or Pierre's. The idea of taking my fiancée to a hot-dog stand is —"

"Is entirely suitable," said Wee. "I don't want much to eat, but I'd like some hot coffee. What would you like?"

"Champagne," said Jerry. "Did you ever see a jeroboam of champagne? It's a double magnum, and I'd like to drink your health in it—at one gulp."

"Listen, my dear," said Wee. "You are sweet and generous, but you must n't have these extrava-

gant ideas. We shall have to be very simple. You are n't going to waste your money on me. I see a place that looks clean."

The motherly woman in charge of the stand put her simple foods on the table, and quacked around them like a maternal duck while they ate.

"Not such a bad supper at that," said Jerry, at last. "To think that we'll have supper together every night of our lives! Wee, let me drive."

He settled himself behind the steering wheel, and started the engine with difficulty. There was a special valve that turned on gasoline for the start, and then switched to kerosene, cheaper by four cents a gallon.

"One of Uncle Roger's ideas," said Wee.

"Ingenious," said Jerry, coaxing the balky Pope-Hartford out on the highway, where it settled down to the pace of an elderly horse.

"Don't humor it," said Wee. "We've got twenty miles to go. Go on, Jerry, step on the gas."

"I can't. This car burns kerosene."

Wee gave a laugh that sounded perilously like a sob.

"It does," she said. "And I've joked about it all these years as if it had been — a joke!"

"Never mind. Tell me about the ghastly details of getting engaged."

But Wee was silent for some time, nestling against Jerry's arm as he drove. The east wind blew in

their faces, and he looked back in the tonneau for a rug in which to wrap her. There was none. Her coat seemed thin, and he stopped the car, took off his fur coat, and buttoned it over her shoulders like a cape. She protested a little, but she felt like a baby in his arms.

"The principal difficulty," she said at last, "will be Uncle Roger. He manages everything for Aunt Caroline and me. He does n't live with us, but he is my guardian, and takes care of all business matters. I know he will insist on seeing you alone."

"I'll beard him," said Jerry. "I'd beard anyone for you."

"He has n't got a beard."

"You surprise me," Jerry said. "You've been so many different girls this afternoon. You've been a correct young Boston girl, bowing to Mrs. Joshua Easeman on Beacon Street. You've been a sternly practical young matron, advising me to buy you a hot dog instead of a partridge. You've been a low comedian, turning my most sacred remarks into loathsome jokes. And you've been—"

"What else have I been, darling?"

"You've been Helen of Troy," said Jerry, softly. "You've been Iseult and Marguerite and Heloise—you've been all the dream girls ever conceived by the heart of man."

"I like you when you are serious," said Wee. "But this is n't the place for it. We are now rush-

ing along a dangerous road full of second-hand cars with second-hand drivers. Please put your mind on your driving, Jerry."

"You made one failure, my lass," said Jerry.

"What do you mean?"

"The nickname Grizzly has n't stuck. You forgot all about it before we had supper. Let's be truly original, and call each other by our right names, even after we're married. I know one perfectly sickening couple who call each other Pups and Poodle."

"And I know one," said Wee, dreamily, "who call each other Woof Dog and Pudd'n Pie. Jerry, you wanted to know my real name. My real name's one of the things I can't stand."

Jerry put his foot down hard on the accelerator, and succeeded, after a race lasting three minutes, in passing a truck.

"There are many things you won't have to stand," he said. "I'm here to take care of you now. Tell me about this uncle of yours. If he's rotten to you, I'll make him jump in the Charles."

"He is n't rotten to me. He's just rather old, and set in his ways. But he's very thoughtful. In fact, some people might think him a little *too* thoughtful about money. Some Boston men are like that."

"You bet," said Jerry. "I've tried to sell bonds to them."

"Every Monday morning, at ten sharp, I go to his office," continued Wee. "He looks over my accounts, and approves or rejects any expenses I have in mind."

"He does, does he?"

"There were five brothers," said Wee. "Uncle Roger, Uncle Lothrop, Uncle Griswold, Uncle Jonas, and my father, who was Pickman Legg. They all died years ago, except Uncle Roger, so he is the trustee for the estate, and he often says that five men's work has fallen on him. I'm the only member of the younger generation. Uncle Roger has arranged for my upbringing from the start. He's really a wonderful housekeeper. He knows the wholesale prices of all foods, and tells me when to buy, and when not. This car was a wreck, after a collision, and he bought it on the spot. By using fish at the right time, instead of meat, I can —"

Jerry put his weight on the rusty steering wheel and twisted the car through the traffic in Harvard Square, while Wee went on with her description of Uncle Roger. He had never set foot in a taxicab. He had resigned from all his clubs, except the League of American Wheelmen. Jerry formed a mental picture of him—a reserved, proud old aristocrat, doling out the last crumbs of the family estate, and succeeding through bitter economy in keeping a patched mansard roof over the heads of his sister-in-law and niece on Marlboro Street.

Such an uncle, beyond question, would welcome a young man who would strive hard to provide for his girl. Perhaps Uncle Roger was a genial old fellow, who missed the cheery good-fellowship of his clubs. Those business meetings with Wee, on Monday mornings, sounded rather dreary—those meetings in which he counseled her to choose inexpensive haddock and not costly beefsteak. But she was the light of his life, of course. Jerry looked forward to entering the family circle; a young man can bring so much warmth into an old one's life.

"Do you spend much time with your uncle?" he asked.

"He likes to be alone," said Wee. "Aunt Caroline and I dine with him once a year."

There was a pause after that—a long one.

"I told you Uncle Roger would be difficult," said Wee. "Aunt Caroline is a dear. She is not very well, because she is seventy-three and has phlebitis, but she's a dear. She comes from Providence. She says she likes you because you have a demon in your eye."

"I wonder if Uncle Roger will notice the same attraction."

"He won't," said Wee. "He has always thought I needed some extra discipline because of my father. My father was the black sheep of the family. He ran away from the Legg home when he was sixteen; did you know?"

"I did n't know," said Jerry, impressed. "Where did he run to?"

"To Shanghai. Perhaps our piratical blood was too much for him. It's a great joke, you know, about the first Legg having been a pirate, but Uncle Roger does n't appreciate it. Then, when he came back from Shanghai, he ran away again — to Costa Rica, to grow coffee."

"Did n't he go to college?"

"Only for a year. Then the family decided he would have to sow his wild coffee in his own way. He discovered that bananas are more profitable than coffee, and he interested some people in them, and came back with a little money. Then he married mother — she was Ellen Parnham, of Brookline — and they had just four years together. They spent them mostly at Newport and abroad. In fact, they died at Monte Carlo, and Aunt Carrie went over and brought me back. I suppose they were interested in me as the last of the line."

"They had a right to be. Thank you for telling me so much."

"I have some pictures taken at Newport. Father drove horses very well, and he had a coach. Uncle Roger is still talking about that coach; I can't tell you how he hates it. He says that Newport life is suitable only for spendthrifts and debauchees. He also says that my father's love for the gaming tables shortened his life. I can't begin to tell you all the things he says."

She sighed, and he patted her arm, thinking how small and pathetic she looked in his enormous coat. Perhaps this strangely sportive father of hers, this devotee of coaching and roulette, was not a Legg at all. Perhaps he had been left on the Legg front steps in a basket. Where did Wee's dark beauty come from, her gayety, her independence of spirit? She was not one of those blonde-haired Boston girls, as placid as cows. She had fire. He remembered how she had surrendered to him in the lane. It had been like kissing a nymph—but a nymph aflame with desire. If there were a bar sinister in her coat of arms, it would be no bar, but a blessing.

"I'm a Legg, all right," said Wee. "Oh, you need n't look so surprised. People who love each other can read each other's minds. Even in this poor light I can see queer expressions chasing themselves over your dear, foolish face. People used to wonder if father was a genuine Legg, but he was. Uncle Roger and Uncle Jonas sat right outside the door while he was born, and Aunt Carrie was in the room. I made her tell me that. I've always wanted to be sure. But he ran away to Shanghai. I've often wanted to do the same thing."

"Everybody feels that way sometimes."

"Yes, but how few ever go! And now look what has happened. I'm going to marry a Harvard crew captain, with offices in State Street."

"I won't be much of an escape for you. I'm in a groove, too."

"But there's a demon in your eye," said Wee, hopefully. "And there's a demon in me. Why is it, Jerry, that among the oldest New England families there are people who look like Portuguese pirates, or the daughters of tobacco merchants in Greece?"

"A lot happened in the seventeenth century that has n't yet been reported in the Boston Evening Transcript."

"Shiploads of wives from Europe," said Wee. "The early Harvard graduates buried at least three wives apiece. And those Salem shipowners may have had some fun in foreign ports that has n't got into the Transcript, either. I've been raised to think about ancestors so much that maybe I've got a right to think about ancestresses, too, Jerry."

"What is it, my dear?"

"There's a gypsy in me, somewhere, and I don't believe she was a sternly moral gypsy, either. Is n't that a hideous confession for a member of the Junior League, and the Chilton Club, and the St. Botolph Lend-a-Hand Society? All my uncles were so upright they might have been strapped to boards. And they *were* strapped to boards—to boards of directors and school boards, and so forth. They stayed here in Boston, and managed cotton mills, and passed the plate in church every Sunday. They were trustees. They did all the conventional things. Grandfather used to say that the conventions were established to make us comfortable."

Jerry drove slowly through Cambridge, amazed by the tremor in Wee's voice.

"Well, it's no use wishing," said Wee. "I'll stay here, and be a conventional Boston dame."

"The hell you will," said Jerry, gruffly. "I'll run away with you to-morrow."

"That would be nice," said Wee. "But it wouldn't be fair to Uncle Roger. He has done everything for me—he has consulted with Aunt Carrie about schools, dentists, tonsils, Sunday school, psychiatry, suitors, charities, and everything else a girl needs. Every Thursday, at four o'clock sharp, he consults with her."

"It sounds a bit stiff, now you mention it."

"Uncle Roger is a receiver for so many things, including me. Aunt Carrie is only the woman who brought me up. That's a much less serious thing. Well, we'll go home and tell her the news."

"Will that make everything legal?"

"Far from it."

"Do the banns have to be read?"

"You must be thinking about those classic novelists you are so keen about," said Wee. "Anthony Trollope or Hugh Walpole. Nothing will be legal till you see Uncle Roger."

She laughed so dismally that Jerry knew all his suspicions must be right. This girl had been deprived, by her family's poverty, of everything that makes life worth living. There had been no warmth,

no cheerfulness in the little family group that met on Mondays and Thursdays at such and such an hour, sharp. There was no money to buy flowers, or interesting food, or pretty new furniture to brighten the sombre horrors of Aunt Caroline's drawing-room.

He knew what he would do. He would take her out of it, and give her the things she deserved. He stopped the car with a jerk.

"I'm not fit to kiss the laces of your shoes," he said. "But I know courage when I see it. We call it guts where I come from. You have it, in the highest degree. You are suffocating here. We'll get out of Boston. We'll go abroad. I've got two thousand dollars saved up, and I'll spend every cent of it to give you the kind of trip you deserve. Your father went to Shanghai, did he? Well, we'll go there too. Though I think I'd rather like the *Ægean Islands*. Would you like them, Wee?"

"I'd love them," she said, eagerly.

Jerry chuckled. "It will be fun," he said. "We'll have to go in some hooker that does n't generally take passengers. A Portuguese cattle boat, or a Greek tobacco steamer. Maybe you'll have to sign on as a stewardess, and I'll be assistant purser. But we'll make it, somehow. I'd walk round the world with you, and after our shoes wore out I'd walk barefoot and carry you on my back. Does that sound fantastic? Well, it's true."

"Thank you for understanding a little, Jerry," she said.

"A little! Why, I understand a whole lot."

He started the car again, and drove over Harvard Bridge in a purposeful way.

"Your childhood must have been hell," he said. "I suppose they psychoanalyzed you at school to see why you did n't show the precise amount of group spirit suitable to a good little Boston girl. Uncle Roger supervised your suitors, did he? Would you tell me more about them?"

"I've had more than fifty offers," said Wee, calmly. "Some of the men were sober and some were tight — but you're the first of all of them who really wanted *me*."

"What?"

"How you can possibly have lived in Boston and not known about Uncle Roger," said Wee, "is more than I can imagine. But I suppose you are just divinely dumb. What do you think these men wanted?"

"They wanted you."

"No, they did n't. I never heard a man say, 'I love you,' and mean it, until you said it to me."

"Well, then," asked Jerry, "what did they want?"

"I don't know how to tell you," said Wee. "But when you spoke of my going as a stewardess on a cattle boat —"

She paused, catching her breath.

"Jerry," she said, "tell me something on your honor. How much money do you think I've got?"

"I've never stopped to think about it," he said.

"I know that's true," said Wee. "I knew you were n't pretending, yesterday and to-day. Darling, you *will* keep on loving me, won't you? I've been so lonely and frightened all my life."

"I wish I was good enough for you."

"Oh, Jerry, it's the other way round. You've made a place for yourself. Everybody likes you. Girls are fascinated by you. Again and again I've wanted to show you how I cared for you—but I could n't do that. Come on, Jerry. How much do you think I've got?"

"Must we talk about money?" he said.

"Yes, right here in the blinding publicity of Marlboro Street we have got to talk about it," she insisted. "Old Mrs. Gibbins is staring at us from her bow window, and probably the other windows are full of eyes, but I don't care. Come on, Jerry darling, guess."

He looked at her. He knew nothing about girls' clothes, but something told him that her hat and her shoes were inexpensive and old. He looked at the battered dashboard and fenders of her decrepit car. He looked slowly up at the small, ugly brick house with its patched mansard roof.

"I should think," he said, at last, "that you may have — or will some day have — about five thousand dollars a year."

She gave a scream and sprang out of the car. The scream was not quite a shriek and not quite a sob, but it had a hysterical note that made him wonder if she was laughing or crying. He followed her out of the car and she turned around and put her hands into his on the doorstep. She was laughing now in a strange, proud way and her eyes were bright with pride.

"I love you, Jerry," she breathed. "Whither thou goest I will go, and thy people shall be my people. Come along in."

She fumbled for her latchkey, failed to find it, and rang the doorbell.

"While the maid is coming," she whispered, "I've just time to tell you that the Legg estate is more than seventy million dollars, and it's all coming to me!"

III

PAPER BETWEEN THE KNEES

STUPEFIED, Jerry stared at the shabby old walnut doors, with their glass upper panels and carved bosses of walnut below. Then he followed Wee into the hall.

"Norah!" she cried to the aged maid. "Norah, please congratulate me. This is Mr. Jerry McCoy, and I'm going to marry him."

"Glory be to God, Miss Wee!" piped the servant, in her thin old voice. "I'm sure you have my prayers for health and wealth, and children in herds and droves, glory be to God!"

Wee gave the old servant a kiss.

"We were just talking about wealth," she said. "We have n't arranged for droves of children yet. Norah, dear, please go and tell Mrs. Legg that I am coming to give her some very important news. Now, Jerry! I'm sorry I deceived you. I'm sorry you got engaged to me under false pretenses, thinking I was so poor. *I am* poor, Jerry. Uncle Roger has all the Legg money in trust. If we go to the Mediterranean, that dear, dirty little steamer full of Portuguese cows will be just our style. But

some day you can have the Mauretania for your very own, if you want it. I'm sorry I had to talk about money. It has been my curse so long. Jerry, let's never mention money again. . . . But I forgot. You'll have to mention it to Uncle Roger to-morrow. Better go early and get it over. I'll make an appointment for you now."

She smiled at him, and whirled upstairs like a leaf in an eddy of wind.

He walked home to his room on Revere Street an hour later, still dazed by the events that had crowded in upon him. Wee's surrender was one unforgettable, almost incredible fact. Wee's seventy million dollars was another. He tried to put it out of his mind, even while he said to himself that it was one of those facts no human young man could forget.

Fifty proposals! Fifty men, some sober and some tight, but all with that glittering fact of the seventy million dollars in the front of their minds. Jerry was the only one of them who wanted Wee entirely for herself. She could tell the shade of difference in the words "I love you" when spoken by a man who really meant them. He had won Wee, and he had won an enormous fortune, too, by thinking she was poor. He had offered—how grimly fantastic it seemed now!—to snatch her away from poverty.

He found himself dancing a sort of jig in his bare

feet on the bathroom floor. Seventy million dollars! No more cheap lodging houses, with cockroachy bathrooms. No more trudging around Boston to sell bonds to tight-lipped investors. Tight-lipped tightwads! Jerry repeated this phrase. It pleased him. Then he stopped dancing. It was unseemly to dance at such a moment. Men with seventy million dollars don't caper around in their bare feet. The tryst with Uncle Roger was to be at eight o'clock sharp next morning. Jerry went soberly to bed, setting his alarm clock for seven.

When the clock sent its jarring reveille through his drowsy brain next morning, Jerry's mood was still chastened. He felt ashamed of his moment of exultation. Wee's money was her own, not his. He despised those wretched married men who go yowling for money to their rich wives. The fact that Wee was so rich would only inspire him to harder effort. Why was he awake so early? To go to see Uncle Roger, of course. He yawned, stretching his arms. It was a wonderful thing to be alive on such a fine, sunny morning. It would be interesting to meet this old Boston aristocrat. A little advance information about him would be worth while.

There was a coin-box telephone on the floor below. Jerry looked through his clothes for a nickel, failed to find one, and tapped on the janitor's door in the basement. The woman lent him a

nickel, and he called up George Hamill, his best friend.

"Cripes!" said George, his own sleepiness vanishing at the mention of Mr. Legg's name. "Don't you know all about him? Why, among all the trustees of Boston, he's the old he-coon. Rich? He's been draining all the Legg money for fifty years, the way the Mississippi River drains the Middle West. . . . Seventy millions? More like eighty, I should say, and he does n't let a cent of it leak away through negligence! . . . It's in bank stocks, and Chicago real estate, and things like that. . . . He's in business, too . . . President of the Cupsuptic Steam Cotton Mills & What Cheer Company of Fall River . . . Amesbury Buggy Corporation . . . Pocasset Participators, an investment trust . . . Boston & Aroostook Steam Packet Line . . . Why, he's Old Man Boston Business himself. . . . Rolling along!"

"Deposit five cents, please, for three minutes' additional conversation," interrupted the operator.

"I have n't got five cents," said Jerry, and hung up. The day felt colder and darker, and he nervously warmed the cold sole of one foot against the shin of his other leg before going back to his room. He dressed thoughtfully, putting aside the Persian orange tie he had meant to wear, and selecting a dark blue one instead. This pillar of Boston enterprise, this old he-coon among all the Boston trustees, would

doubtless disapprove of a flashily dressed young man. A certain drabness and bagginess would appeal to him. Jerry walked down the hill, after dressing, intending to breakfast at the Shawmut Sanitary Kitchen, on Charles Street.

But an invitation for eight o'clock must be an invitation to breakfast. It would be interesting to break bread in Uncle Roger's splendid old Bulfinch mansion, facing the Common. Jerry pulled its old-fashioned bell handle, producing a faint tinkle of sound somewhere in the bowels of the house. He was admitted to a dark brown hall, hung with engravings of Sir Edwin Landseer's paintings. He had time to study the titles—"Stag at Bay," "Dignity and Impudence," and "The Swannery Invaded by Eagles." Then he was shown into the large, cold dining room, where Mr. Legg sat at breakfast.

Jerry expected to see a big man, still burly and powerful in old age; the sort of man who could have hauled around the Mayflower's mainyard, single-handed, or have plucked huge boulders out of a pasture without help. Mr. Legg's forbears did these things, defying tempests and starvation.

The figure at the head of the glittering mahogany table was so tiny it looked like a gnome.

Mr. Legg's head was no larger than an ostrich egg, and equally smooth, with the same yellowish tinge. He had bushy gray eyebrows and a fringe of grizzled beard. His gray frock coat was buttoned close

under his chin, and he wore a black string tie. He sat in a high-backed Italian armchair covered with crimson Venetian velvet. Between its seat and himself was a bound volume of Littell's Living Age for 1878, but Jerry could not observe this until Mr. Legg stood up.

He was in no hurry to stand up. He slowly finished his frugal breakfast, while Jerry murmured a respectful greeting and then looked around the room. The woodwork, superbly carved and paneled, was painted dark brown. Lincrusta ornamentation had been added, many years before, to the severely classic fireplace. Logs of wood had been replaced by a newspaper folded fanwise. The chair legs were capped with rubber to protect the dark Axminster carpet.

Jerry was not sensitive to furniture. But he could not help noticing a magnificent Goddard highboy, and two great wall cabinets of walnut. Behind their glass doors glimmered some of the family Lowestoft and Crown Derby china. Mr. Legg had been breakfasting frugally off Canton ware. The best of his china and silver had been lent many years before to the Boston Museum of Art, thereby providing a safe place of deposit with no storage charges.

But there was a wonderful collection of antiques left in the room, Jerry knew. The crystal chandeliers, and the inlaid knife boxes on the Chippendale

sideboard, and the ancient Coromandel screen—what would such things bring in New York?

Calmly, methodically, Mr. Legg put little bits of boiled cod into his mouth, and washed them down with sips of coffee substitute.

"A bit of fish, a bit of dry toast, and a drop of Graino are all any man needs for breakfast," was a favorite dictum of his. The fish was regularly sent to him by Mr. Elmer Tibbits, the superintendent of his Cupsuptic Steam Cotton Mills & What Cheer Company at Fall River. Mr. Tibbits was a Dorchester boy, as round as a barrel and with a jolly red face. He owned a tumbledown house and ten acres of salt marsh at Tiverton, which he called his farm and conducted as a road house for his cronies; and because he kept Mr. Legg's table well supplied with fish and strawberries and asparagus—"real Rhode Island grass," in season—the old man had a weakness for him, and did not inquire too closely into how many spindles were turning in the mill.

"The cotton business in New England has reached a stage of industrial maturity," he would sometimes say. "Our superintendent at Fall River is a young man of forty-eight, youthful enough to adopt modern methods, and old enough to exercise a wise conservatism."

Young men were not needed, however, in Mr. Legg's steamship line—the Boston & Aroostook Steam Packet Company. Its fleet consisted of one

venerable freighter, the Lady Massachusetts. "Her captain," Mr. Legg often remarked, "is still hale and hearty at ninety-one. In younger centres, like Cleveland or Detroit, he would be ruthlessly retired. But we keep him at work, knowing that he will never risk his ship in bad weather. He spends his vacations at Nantucket with his good old mother, who is still living. Fine people! The old stock of this country."

The cotton mills and steamship line were, however, but minor interests of Mr. Legg's. His backlog, the Legg estate, was kept entirely separate from his industrial concerns. It was well invested in Chicago real estate, in bank stocks, and in the best railroad and government bonds.

Such was the man on whom Jerry McCoy called. His gnomelike smallness was a surprise. When he slipped out of the high-backed Italian armchair he was even shorter than he had seemed while sitting down.

"I see," he began, in a high, quavering voice, "that you are interested in my property."

It was an ominous beginning. Wee Legg was part of his property, no doubt. But Jerry was determined to be cordial, to like the old man, and to make the old man like him. He put out his huge paw, and after a moment's hesitation Mr. Legg touched it with his cold, scratchy little hand.

"I am very glad to be here and see all these beauti-

ful things," Jerry said, dismissing his impression that Mr. Legg's hand felt like a sea gull's foot. "Wee told me that many of your ancestors were sea captains. I wonder if Gilbert Stuart painted the old gentleman over the mantelpiece—the one with the telescope and sextant. He—"

"Let us come to business at once," rasped Mr. Legg. He had the sea gull's accent, too.

Jerry remained in the centre of the room, while its owner sat down primly on a small, delicate settee, placing his square-toed boots together and folding his little hands in his lap.

"My niece has informed me that you wish to marry her," he said. A slight, involuntary twitch in his facial muscles caused Mr. Legg to grin impishly from time to time. He grinned now, and Jerry mistook it for a sign of approval.

"This is not the first interview I have had with a young man on the same topic," Mr. Legg said. "I know nothing of your family, Mr. McCoy, except that it has been settled in America for two centuries. We value such things more highly in New England than elsewhere, except perhaps in certain sections of Virginia which I have not visited. The breakdown of American institutions is due to the infusion of foreign blood and foreign ideas."

"Yes, indeed," said Jerry, encouragingly, conceiving that some comment was expected. "There is jazz, for instance. It comes from Africa."

Looking up after this fatuous remark, he noticed on top of the nearest wall cabinet a model of a full-rigged ship—one of the Legg ships, no doubt. Perhaps that very ship had brought jazz on her slave decks from some African barracoon. Jerry bit his lip. But Mr. Legg was not among those who notice an interruption.

"There are," he said, with gravity, "three kinds of love."

He paused after this, and Jerry heard the hall clock ticking—great luscious ticks like drops of water falling slowly and heavily into a pool. The old man was marshaling his thoughts.

"We may dismiss at once," he said, at last, "the sort of love that is merely the mating call between beasts. And we need not discuss the normal conjugal love that exists between a man and his wife. It is protective on his part, and submissive on hers. A man must provide for his wife, and it is her business to make him a home suitable to his income."

Through Jerry's mind floated the thought that this was a charming picture of married life for a bachelor to form. He wondered what the third kind of love would be.

"The third kind," said Mr. Legg, "is the sort that considers the property aspects of the union. Such a marriage brings large fortunes together, consolidating them and adding to the wealth of both families."

"But I have no large fortune," said Jerry.

He regretted the words before they were out, but Mr. Legg gave no sign of having heard them. "You will give me a statement of your financial position," he said. "What is your business, and your private income?"

Jerry moistened his lips, which had gone stickily dry.

"I work for Carr & Daland," he began. "I'm in the bond department where I—I try to sell bonds."

"How much do you earn?"

"I am averaging nearly ninety dollars a week at present," said Jerry, looking up at the blackened portrait of old Bezaleel Legg, the founder of the family, who sneered down at him from the wall.

What would sturdy, practical old Captain Bezaleel have said to a beggarly ninety dollars a week? Ninety dollars an hour was more nearly his mark! At twenty-two he commanded a full-rigged ship in the China trade. He did n't pull an oar for fun in a racing shell. He hired men to pull oars for him in all the big rivers of the Orient. Those were the brave days when George II was king in London, and a Legg was king on his own quarterdeck. How Bezaleel's great-great-great-grandson must despise a poltroon who slaved for ninety dollars a week!

"You are earning very little," Mr. Legg said. "Have you a list of your securities and other invest-

ments? Sit down, and give me their names in full."

Jerry gulped. How hard it is to remember the names of stocks and bonds, even when one is in the bond business himself! He blurted out a list of common stocks and then began to mention a few good bonds, starting with Dominion of Canada.

"One moment. Do you regard Blue Sky Aviation common stock as a conservative investment?"

"It has been doing very well, and —"

"It may be entirely suitable for an almost penniless trifler," croaked Mr. Legg. "Proceed."

While Jerry limped through his list of securities, Mr. Legg made notes on a memorandum pad neatly constructed by himself out of the backs of old envelopes held together by a rubber band. He added up his list and shook his head sadly over it. His next question came with the hard, unexpected shock of a rapier thrust in the back: —

"What are your expectations at your father's death?"

"My father is still alive."

Jerry could say no more. His imagination was strong enough to picture his father dying alone somewhere in France, on a hotel bed, attended casually by a bearded and bored French doctor. Sons whose fathers have heart disease are not free from such pictures. Jerry shook this one off, turning his mind to Wee.

"Come on, you Jerry McCoy," he said to himself.

"What difference does it make what you tell this old man? He can't bite you!"

And then, aloud, he said: "I'm sorry, sir, but I can give you no idea of the size of his estate. I've never asked him. I hope and believe that he will live for many years."

"You will learn to look at such things differently," said Mr. Legg, smiling his impish smile. "You have been happy-go-lucky. But from this moment, Mr. McCoy, you will have responsibility. You will know what financial worry is. It will be your first thought in the morning, your last on going to bed at night. You may have plunged into college life without counting the cost, but you cannot plunge into marriage in that spirit. No. Instead of saying that you make 'nearly' a certain sum of money, you will have to watch every penny of your income and expenditures. A married man is never free for one instant from anxiety about money."

Mr. Legg delivered these comfortless words with such emphasis that Jerry had an unpleasant conviction that he must be right. He blushed and then sat rigidly under a searching investigation of his father's reasons for leaving the banking business and going abroad to live. Jerry's father purchased pictures for several American museums, and for private collectors. But this was merely an avocation, not a business. Mr. Legg made it seem trifling, and even faintly dishonorable.

"Your father is a hedonist," he said. "Does he make you an allowance?"

"He sends me money from time to time," Jerry said. "When his own investments are doing well he sometimes sends me five hundred dollars; but when —"

"It would be far better for you, and for the establishment of orderly financial habits, if he sent you even as little as twenty dollars a week, punctually on the first day of every week."

"You don't know father. He's a man interested — well, in his friends, and art, and music, and things of that kind. It would be quite impossible for him to —"

"There I disagree with you." Mr. Legg held up his dry little hand. "He has but to instruct his bankers to place a small sum to your credit at regular intervals. I should like to meet your father."

"He is at Cannes, France," answered Jerry.

"I have nevertheless asked Mr. Perkins Daland about him," said Mr. Legg. "Unless his affairs have been going from bad to worse, he has a fortune of about two hundred thousand dollars, which will be divided among you and three sisters. It is not a cheerful outlook for you, Mr. McCoy."

"But I have spent very little," Jerry said. "I have lived in cheap rooms on Revere Street. I have had the fun of making my own way."

"Humph!"

Mr. Legg's sour little cough accurately registered his opinion of the word "fun" as applied to making a living.

"You have loose, wasteful habits," he said, with a frown.

"I beg your pardon. I—"

"I have been watching you closely, and you have crossed your legs."

"Why, yes—so I have!"

Startled, Jerry uncrossed his legs.

"There is no harm in that habit, if you remember to place a piece of paper, a napkin, or even your hand between your knees. But if cloth touches cloth, the tiny filaments interlock, and your trouser legs soon grow shiny. My father taught me this habit, and it prolongs the life of my trousers—and consequently of my suits—over whole periods of years."

It was true. Mr. Legg had been sitting, through the whole interview, with a piece of the Boston Herald clamped between his legs. Jerry put his own hand into position, pulling it out and reinserting it with the air of a studious boy performing a laboratory experiment.

"But is n't it hard to remember?" he asked.

"Do it for but one week," said Mr. Legg, "and you will never have to remember it again."

Pleased by Jerry's interest, he went on to describe other economies.

"You are wearing a folded collar," he said. "A stand-up collar is equally comfortable, and if you will mark it with indelible ink you will find that it stands at least fifty more washings. I have one dozen collars, I am careful to wear them in regular rotation, and they have lasted me for nine years."

"That is very interesting," Jerry said.

"Even more startling," said Mr. Legg, "is the high cost of neckwear. If you knot and untie silk fabric, it soon loses its lustre, and cannot be pressed into shape. All my brothers and I adopted this method of adding to the life of our ties."

He pulled his black string tie suddenly away from his collar in front, and let it snap gently back again. Then he took it off, stupefyingly, over his head.

"You see," he said. "I tied this cravat carefully when it came from Raymond's, a few years ago. Then my good old servant, Abigail, snipped it at the back with scissors and inserted two inches of elastic. I put it on over my head, and have never retied the knot from that day to this. But it is not a readymade tie. I tied it to suit my own taste, in the manner I happen to prefer."

"Well, Mr. Legg," said Jerry, "I should never have thought of *that*."

Mr. Legg beamed.

"Does Wee know about such things?" asked Jerry.

"She is a child of her family," smiled Mr. Legg.
"Her stock pot is the best in Boston."

"Her what?"

"Her stock pot, in which all scraps are boiled. The swill pail of an average American family holds enough nourishing food to feed a French family for a week."

"Does Wee boil her swill in a pot?"

"A thrifty family," said Mr. Legg, severely, "has virtually no swill."

"I am sure Wee is very careful," said Jerry, after a pause.

The master of millions burst into cackling laughter. Jerry blinked at him.

"Wee is a child of her family," repeated Mr. Legg. "She knows all these things. Even as a child of six she had her own little check book and the old clerk in my office honored her little withdrawals—when they did not exceed her budgeted allowance, of course. Therefore she knows the value not merely of a dollar, but a dime. She spends no money unless she has the better of the bargain. Except for her clothes, which are largely made at home, and for a tennis club and the Junior League, both of which she will no doubt soon outgrow, she seems to spend nothing at all. You may count yourself lucky, Mr. McCoy."

"I do," Jerry said.

He choked back an impulse to say that he did count himself lucky—lucky to have a girl who hated these dreary economies, this fanatical pinching of pennies, this niggardly paring of the cheese. While he sat in silence, Mr. Legg pressed his point home.

"Even in Boston such young women are becoming uncommon," he said. "You may count yourself lucky indeed."

"I am," said Jerry. His anger flared into words. "I am lucky because Wee is so sweet, so patient, so generous. Because she has the look of an angel come down to earth—because she is the girl I have dreamed about all my life."

Mr. Legg was not listening.

"Upstairs," he said, in his high, petulant voice, "I have a room which my niece and I decorated together. By collecting samples of wallpaper, ever since she was old enough to go to the shops and ask for them, we finally secured enough to paper a room. It makes an admirable setting for my grandmother's patchwork quilt. We call it the Patchwork Room."

In spite of himself, Jerry smiled at the old man's enthusiasm.

"You show a proper interest in my economies," said Mr. Legg. "It may interest you to know that this coat has been turned not only once but twice, so the buttons are now on the right side again."

He rose, and revolved slowly. Jerry gave a suitable murmur of approval, and then held his tongue until Mr. Legg spoke again.

"You and my niece," he began, and Jerry's heart leaped up at those words, "must live cautiously, frugally. A friend of mine, a business associate, has built some good little houses of the English type at Newtonhurst Terrace Gardens. Some are single, some semidetached. I will scrutinize the deed to one of these houses, making sure its terms are advantageous. You will be able to purchase it over a term of years."

"Would — would Wee like that?" Jerry asked. "I did n't expect to buy a home at first. I thought we'd take an apartment somewhere —"

"Wretched management," said Mr. Legg. "At the end of each year you have nothing to show for the money spent. Wee agrees with me. I have informed her that several of these houses are not yet sold, and she will take you to see them soon. We may consider that settled."

He leaned forward and put his thin little hand on Jerry's knee.

"Save the pennies," he said. "This morning paper costs two cents. But my next-door neighbor, Pyam Blowers, and I club together. He receives his copy at seven, reads it, and puts it on his hall table when he goes out at eight. My Abigail finds it there, and leaves one cent for it. By dividing the

cost in that way we each save six dollars a year — and that is the annual interest on one hundred and twenty dollars at five per cent!”

The old head was so near the young one, now, that Mr. Legg and Jerry had the air of conspirators when Wee came into the room.

“You seem to be hobnobbing,” she said, cheerfully. “Uncle Roger, I told you that Jerry was an attractive young man.”

Then the blow fell.

Uncle Roger drew himself sternly up. He stood five feet one in his What Cheer cotton socks.

“It has been my hope for years that you would marry and bear children,” he said to Wee. “You have been hard to satisfy. Many young men of better birth and prospects than this one have failed to please you. But this man does.”

He grinned mechanically, and for a moment Jerry felt almost drawn to him.

“I will do my best to please her,” he said. “I will work hard, and try to save —”

“The less you promise,” rasped Mr. Legg, “the less you will have to perform. Hear me out, Mr. McCoy. Neither your habits nor your expectations are satisfactory to me. You are an almost penniless young trifler. But you take an interest in sensible thrift. I will help you. I have decided to settle upon you and my niece, jointly, the sum of one million dollars at once.”

Wee swayed against the wall. Jerry gasped, recovered himself, and found his tongue.

"But — but — this is unexpected — this is typically generous of you, Mr. Legg."

"I have no confidence in you whatever," said Mr. Legg. "Not one penny of this money shall be squandered by you, or by my niece, out of mistaken charity for you. Both the principal and interest of this money will be held in irrevocable trust for the heirs."

IV

THE YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER

JERRY and Wee crept out of the house together, like children facing a punishment for sin.

She patted his arm and left him. There was nothing that either could say. He watched her hurrying down Beacon Hill to catch a bus at the corner of Charles Street. Why had n't she come in the venerable car? No doubt Uncle Roger had calculated that it cost less to use the bus between her aunt's house and his own.

Uncle Roger had not shown him to the door, or said good-bye. Jerry had not really expected it. He knew that many old New Englanders view these little civilities with suspicion. Uncle Roger had asked his questions and stated his terms. When the talk was over, it was over. But what a talk it had been! Uncle Roger had seen at once that Jerry was a fortune hunter. He had sneered at Jerry's father, at Jerry's income, at everything Jerry had said—everything except what he supposed was Jerry's admiration of his economies.

His economies! His cheap, miserly economies! His soul-blighting stinginess! Jerry formed these

phrases in his mind as he trudged to his office, and they relieved him a little. But he could not feel happy or calm. He rubbed his eyes hard before sitting down at his battered roll-top desk. Mr. Roger Legg had given him the first real rebuff of his life. He tried to erase its memory by letting his mind dwell on happier things.

He remembered Prize Day at his boarding school. Prize Days had always brought him a shower of trophies. He could close his eyes and recall the four steps leading up to the platform, the Bishop's outstretched hand and saccharine congratulations, the thunder of applause from the benches. All his school memories were pleasant ones. How triumphant he had been, until now! He reviewed his college days. Varsity football is anguish to most men, but Jerry was so much bigger and stronger and quicker than the others that he had almost enjoyed it.

He remembered the smell of wet uniforms and of chloroform liniment in the locker room when the team tramped in, after burying Holy Cross under an avalanche of touchdowns.

He thought of the boat race in his senior year, when his crew leaped away from the struggling, rolling, splashing shell of Yale, and came triumphantly alone down that last long mile of muddy water, with the whistles screeching from a hundred yachts.

That had meant something. How little it meant now! He remembered the day a telephone message from the Harvard Crimson office informed him he had been elected president of the freshman class. He thought of the April evening, a year later, when two solemn-faced seniors in dress coats came to his room in Holworthy Hall to tell him that he had been elected to the Glim Club, oldest and most desirable of all college clubs in the world. He could never forget that evening, nor his memories of dinners at the Glim after he had become its head — the long banquet room with the shine of a hundred candles on white shirtfronts, and the loving cup passing around the table, and himself rising to drink from it first of all. But what could the Glim Club do for him now?

For the first time in his life he had tried to do something thoroughly unselfish. He had forgotten himself in his burst of sympathy for Wee. Every fibre of his body, every impulse in his heart and mind, had urged him to do something for her. And what had he got from it? He had been held up to shame as a fortune hunter. The little gray gnome of Beacon Street had mocked and insulted him. Mr. Legg had seemed to offer him a million dollars, only to snatch it away again. The feast he spread out before Jerry was a Barmecide feast — great golden dishes with no food on them and empty silver goblets that held nothing for his lips, or for Wee's. Mr.

Legg was torturing Wee for daring to marry a man not of her uncle's choice.

Jerry put a finger into his breast pocket to find a handkerchief. There was none, but he felt something else and pulled it out. A withered elderberry leaf! It came from one of the overarching branches in the Concord lane. It gave Jerry a different picture of Wee—not as she had cringed in that bleak dining room on Beacon Street, but Wee in her hour of magnificent surrender to his love.

Every shred of his resentment against her uncle flared up, in one great inward bonfire of hate, and then vanished. He forgot the old man. He pressed the leaf to his lips. He thought of his promise to fight for Wee, to take her out of her drab, starved existence, and show her the Ægean Islands and the blue Mediterranean Sea.

It was absurd to be kissing a leaf so early in the morning, at his desk in the office of Carr & Daland. But the leaf brought all the romance of the Concord lane back to him. Again he lived through the one, great, bright, immortal moment of his life, and saw the thing which destiny had sent him into the world to do.

"What are you eating?" asked George Hamill, from the next desk. "And what's eating you?"

Jerry sat up straight.

"I'm all right," he said, in hollow tones.

"Are n't you going out to-day?"

"Sure, I'm going out. I've got an appointment with old Doctor Tweedie, at eleven."

"This seems to be Old Man's Day for you."

Jerry grunted, and shuffled the papers on his desk. He knew that George Hamill wanted to know all about his interview with Mr. Roger Legg. He knew that George was much too sympathetic a friend to ask about it. Of course George knew that he had been running after Wee. George knew everything. George was his best friend.

But what can his best friends do for a man at a moment like this?

Jerry wished he had been breezy and contemptuous in the old man's house. "Good morning, my old cock," he should have said. "I'm going to take your niece to Greece! You want her to go comfortably, like a lady of your family, of course — so you'll give her plenty of her own money to spend."

And what would Uncle Roger have said to that? He would have grinned his little toothless grin. He would have said: "It is for *you* to provide for my niece now, Mr. McCoy. I shall at once withdraw her allowance of thirty-five dollars a week."

Yes, that is what Uncle Roger would have said. Jerry groaned, and looked up uneasily to see if George Hamill had heard him groan. It was all very well to dream about bearding the Douglas in his hall, but not so easy to do it.

"I'll forget old Legg, and his seventy millions," thought Jerry, at last. "I'll run away with Wee—to Shanghai. Then I won't have to be polite to him ever again. Good morning, Mr. Legg. My humble respects to you, Mr. Legg. No, thank you, I won't take a cup of Psawdusto, Mr. Legg. It's too rich for my low plebeian blood, Mr. Legg. Brr-rr! It makes me shiver just to think of you, Mr. Legg—your million-dollar antiques in your dining room, and the piece of newspaper between your knees. Jerry, you're being a damned fool."

It was better to be a fool than a fortune-hunting trifler. Carr & Daland did not consider him a trifler. He had done well for them, throwing himself into selling bonds with as much energy as if it had been a game. He had told himself that it *was* a game—a contest in which superior patience, geniality, wits, and courage were sure to win. And they did. He sold more bonds, and more difficult bonds, than any other young man in Boston.

Noticing his depression, the sales manager, Caleb Spinney, handed him an inspirational booklet to read. It was by a New York writer named Barnham Dunn, and its title was "The Six Best Sellers." It contained short, optimistic accounts of Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet, Socrates, Plato, and one other. They were great go-getters, according to Mr. Dunn. They were ideal examples for the young salesman to follow,

Jerry read the booklet mechanically, until he came to an underscored sentence: "A bond salesman is the ambassador of prosperity, the herald of progress and thrift." The word "thrift" set his resentment ablaze once more.

"Want some choice hogwash to read?" he called to George Hamill.

"What's the matter with you, Jerry? You've looked sick for three days."

Jerry got up and sat on George's desk.

"I saw Mr. Roger Legg to-day," he said. "And the fact is—"

He stuck fast, clearing his throat.

"I know what the fact is," said George. "I've seen you driving with Wee Legg. I congratulate you, Jerry!"

He shook Jerry's limp hand.

"It's great!" he said. "She's absolutely fine, Jerry. You'll be very happy."

"I *am* very happy," said Jerry.

George Hamill forbore to tell him that he did n't look it.

"Are things breaking too fast for you?" he asked, sympathetically. "Did you have a knock-down and drag-out fight with the old man?"

"You can't fight him," Jerry said. "If you breathed hard on him he'd dissolve. I thought he was going to tie a can to me. But instead of kicking me out of the house he gave me and Wee a million

dollars for a wedding present! Don't make that loud noise, George. He took the money right back again. We can't touch it, either of us. It's going to be held in irrev—in irrevocable trust, for the heirs. He's going to have a deed drawn right away. George, up to eight o'clock last night I did n't know that Wee had a cent!"

"Jerry," said George, "it seems to me that you've gone in off the deep end."

"Well, then, damn it, I'll swim!"

Jerry went back to his desk, kicked a scrap basket savagely out of his way, and began to stuff bond circulars into his Boston bag. He forced himself to look at them. They were the conservative, solid investments offered by Carr & Daland.

Here was the announcement of the latest bond issue of the Old Colony Harness Company—a concern as old as the United States itself, still turning out its carefully made product, "the kind your forefathers used." Perhaps its articles sold sluggishly in this land of automobiles and tractors, but Jerry had a vivid mental picture of moujiks in Russia ploughing with harness made in Lynn. Here was the circular describing the Honduras Agricultural Mortgage Gold Bonds. Jerry thought of that happy little republic nestling under the strong right arm of Uncle Sam, and looking to Uncle Sam's investors to make its farmers happy. Then came the 4½ Adjustment Bonds of the Bay State Hair Goods

Company, languishing a little while women insisted on wearing their hair short. But that was only a mood. It would pass, like other fads. Jerry had looked up the words of Saint Paul concerning the propriety of long hair for females. Old Doctor Tweedie was of a religious turn of mind. Saint Paul would move his mind toward the revival of long hair, and of the Bay State Adjustment Bonds.

But even as he repeated the apostle's scathing words, to be sure he remembered them, the memory of his shameful interview with Mr. Legg came flooding back. He went to George Hamill's desk.

"I would n't touch a cent of his dirty money," he whispered hoarsely. "He saves it up by never buying a new pair of pants, and by eating his swill. I would n't touch it if he got down on his knees and begged me to take it. I—"

"Shut up," said George, mildly.

"All I want is to take Wee somewhere. I want to take her where she'll never see that old—"

"I'm going to take you somewhere. I'm going to take you for a walk."

Jerry put on his coat and hat, and picked up his bag full of circulars. The two friends walked silently to Commonwealth Avenue, and along the Avenue for a mile and back.

"I'm all right now," said Jerry. "I'm going to work. And God help the man who refuses to buy a bond to-day!"

"That is the ideal spirit for a salesman facing his tasks," said George. "You'll sell a carload of bonds this morning. Nobody can possibly resist you."

"Somebody did."

"No, he did n't. You were n't fighting *him*. You did n't go around to grab his money, Jerry. I know you better than that. You went around to be decent and friendly to an old man. He lives on the income of the income of his income! You did n't know what these snooty old trustees are like. Sons of obituaries! Mr. Legg brought up the subject of money, did n't he? And you're sore with him for Wee's sake? I thought so. Well, you're no worse off than you were yesterday. You had n't anything then, and you haven't anything now. What are you belly-aching about?"

"I wish," said Jerry, "that I was as decent as you think I am."

"You are! Are you all right now?"

"Yes."

"Then go and see Doctor Tweedie. Go and see all your best prospects. March on down the field, fighting for Eli."

Jerry shook himself.

"I'll *have* to fight," he said. "It would break Wee's heart if I did n't. I would n't touch a cent of that old miser's money, George, not even if he got down on his knees and begged——"

"Hearts can be broken, and deeds too," said George, walking away.

It was a mysterious remark. But George loved to be mysterious. Jerry put it out of his mind. Nobody was ever going to get a cent of Mr. Roger Legg's money — not all the king's horses and all the king's men. Jerry looked moodily at the little, bespectacled Bostonians on the sidewalk. How do such people live? Do they have fierce emotions, aching resentments? They live, apparently, by taking in each other as lodgers. Jerry knew that any of them would regard his ninety dollars a week as princely. He had been quite comfortable before the spectre of those seventy million dollars had risen in his mind.

"I'm a low-down pup," he said to himself. "I'm a yellow dog with fleas. I'll never be able to hold up my head again."

But he held it up as he entered Doctor Tweedie's office, and began to talk smoothly about Bay State Hair Goods Bonds. At the right instant he quoted Saint Paul: "*If it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. . . . But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering.*"

Old Doctor Tweedie bought twenty-five bonds.

Jerry rushed out to a telephone booth, and called up Wee.

"I'm having a wonderful day," he said. "Every-

thing is going great. . . . Yes, of course I can work. I'm working for you, now. . . . Yes, my dear. . . . You 're going to Marblehead for the night? You say you really must? . . . Of course you can tell your friends. I told George. . . . Yes, you can put it in the Transcript to-night. Oh, Wee, why can't we meet *now*?"

They met for a breathless twenty minutes in the secluded court of the Public Library, and then Jerry went back to work. His fighting mood lasted through the afternoon. He had a long talk with the president of the Hoosic-Whisac Trust Company, and persuaded that official to buy a block—a miraculously large block—of the Agricultural Mortgage Bonds of the Republic of Honduras.

After reporting this excellent sale by telephone, he walked homeward, whistling, across the Public Garden. His head was now so high in the air that he collided embarrassingly with a party of bird lovers who were scanning the trees with opera glasses.

"*Most* unfortunate!" said one elderly young lady, with a glare. "I *thought* I saw a yellow-bellied sapsucker in that elm, Martha—but this person ran right into me."

Jerry bowed vaguely, and strode on up Beacon Hill. The griminess of Revere Street meant nothing to him. He was picturing his life with Wee in a rose-bowered little cottage somewhere. At

Newton, perhaps. No, he would not take her to a semidetached English-type home. He climbed the narrow stairs to his room, and flung himself on the window seat. It was five o'clock. In a few minutes the Transcript would come, and the greatest of all possible news would be on its front page.

V

MY TRUSTEES

ACROSS Louisburg Square, so well-kempt and cosy, and then down the slummy side of Beacon Hill to Revere Street, purred a big blue roadster, with George Hamill at the wheel and Sam Purvis and Ephraim Smith behind him.

They were Jerry's best friends, classmates at Harvard and fellow members of Harvard's best club, the Glim. Hamill had rowed with him on the crew, Purvis had played football with him, and Eph Smith had accepted his first jokes for the Lampoon. They had all congratulated him on his engagement, but this was the first time they had visited him, all together and with no strangers present, as in the brave days of old.

Under his window they blew several jovial blasts on the horn, and Jerry looked down at them with joy and pride. Then they trooped up the dark brown stairs to his dark brown room.

"You 've been doing finely," said George. "Caleb's so pleased with your sales during the past three days that he wants you to crew for him at Marblehead next Saturday."

"That, I understand, corresponds to the Legion of Honor in your office," said Eph Smith.

"It does," said George. "It's the brightest prize we've got. I told him you'd be delighted, Jerry. You can set his spinnaker for him. You are n't asked for Sunday, because spinnakers are not carried in the Sunday races, out of respect for the Lord's Day."

"We are n't here to discuss the Lord's day," said Sam. "I think it's great you're getting married, Jerry."

"It's great," said Eph Smith.

"We all think it's great," said George.

"Yes," agreed Jerry, "it's great."

"When George told us, we said it was great," added Eph.

"Great," said Sam.

The pause that followed was so long that George tactfully broke it with the word "Great."

Eph pulled a form-fitting quart flask from his pocket. "Change signals," he said. "Tell Muttogeffo, your Japanese manservant, that we now require tall glasses and ice cubes."

"I have n't any Japanese manservant," said Jerry. "There may be some glasses in the bathroom. I have n't any ice."

"Do not apologize, my worthy man," said Eph Smith. "We are social workers from the St. Botolph Lend-a-Hand Society, and we quail at no

tenement, no matter how low. I'll get the glasses."

He returned with a cracked tumbler, a jelly jar, and two tooth mugs. Eph Smith poured small drinks of pre-war Bourbon whiskey. They gathered around Jerry, and George Hamill spoke.

"The bride—God bless her!" he said, and threw his tooth mug with fine ceremony into the fireplace. The others followed suit, Jerry last. This was the first time in years he had drunk with his friends without a certain club toast—a toast hallowed by nearly three centuries of time. But nobody mentioned it. The visitors were looking for more glasses, and there were none.

"We could use the flower vase, if that poor dead ivy was n't in it," suggested Hamill.

"Or pour a libation," said Eph. "Suppose I anoint you with this oil of gladness, Jerry—just a drop or two, very delicately, on the lobes of your ears, like the Archbishop of Canterbury when crowning a king."

"You make me tired," said Sam Purvis. "This party's getting sticky. What's that sound like an exhausted machine-gun? A typewriter on the floor below?"

"That's a lady poet," Jerry said. "Not to be disturbed. Writes plays, too. Eph, don't you think of it. Sit down."

But Eph, remarking that he was literary himself,

had started downstairs to borrow glasses. He knocked on the door of the room under Jerry's, and a deep, hearty voice bade him come in.

"Finished breaking glass upstairs?" asked the poetess—a large, resolute-looking woman who was pounding the smallest portable typewriter Eph had ever seen. "Sit down till I finish this scene. There's a copy of Child Uplift magazine on the floor, if you want something to read."

Abashed, Eph sat down on a kitchen chair. The typewriter clicked for some time. Then its owner stood up and beamed at him through her horn rims.

"Why, you're the errand boy at Little, Brown's," she said. "I've seen you there several times."

"Are you one of our authors?" asked Eph, politely.

"I'm E. Phillips Oppenheim," answered the lady. "Get me a pipe and a bulldog, and I'll show you how I look in your blurbs."

"There are pipes upstairs, sir," said Eph. "I wish to report that the party in Jerry McCoy's room has grown a trifle mucilaginous, and so—"

"Has the rum given out?"

"Not in the least. But we are honest working-men, blunt, plain-spoken chaps of good habits, and there are no more glasses."

"I come to this room," said the lady, "to escape from bores. It is a workroom, which I use under an alias."

"Your secret," said Eph, "will be safe with us."

She rolled, with surprising alacrity, to a cupboard.

"What do you want to drink?"

"Whiskey."

"Cointreau," amended the lady. "Here's a bottle of it, and some glasses. Break them if you dare."

"Come up and help us protect them," said Eph.

For ten minutes the deep laugh and infectious chuckle of the poetess made Jerry's party a success. As she sat on Jerry's hard window seat, puffing at the cleanest of his pipes, she was like a breath of fresh air—a whole hurricane of fresh air.

"Your father was a beau of mine," she remarked to Jerry. "I think your fiancée's father was rather shocked by me. You know, we used to sit up all night in black pajamas and talk about our souls. Dear me, what innocent talk it was. Naïve little blasphemies out of Swinburne and George Moore. What do young people talk about now, Jerry McCoy?"

"All sorts of things," answered Jerry, truthfully. "But I'm surprised to hear my pa-in-law was shocked. I thought he was rather—gay."

"You don't know the Leggs," chuckled the lady. "If you take that bride of yours to New York, be careful not to let her see too much. This tobacco

is vile, by the way. I'll send you a tin of something less foul when you're married. What does Wee need? I suppose I could ask Uncle Roger."

Jerry waited uncomfortably.

"Uncle Roger would suggest a nice, complete set of sheets and pillowcases," said the lady. "And if I did n't rise to that bait he'd mention something pretty for the home—one of those Lady Worcester Wizard Kitchen Cabinets, or some other convenience that will help you to kiss the servants good-bye. Well, I'm going to kiss you good-bye, myself."

She blew a kiss to Jerry, and rolled out of the room. But she turned on the stairs to call out, "*I won't* give her a Gilligan Garbage Gobbler! I've got a couple of Dürer prints that she can't match in the shops."

"She's a wonder," said Eph Smith. "She reminded us that we have n't drunk Uncle Roger's health, Jerry. But we must n't waste Cointreau on him. Let's drink it in rhubarb and soda. How's he feeling, anyway?"

"He's well, as far as I know," replied Jerry, stiffly. "I've only known him a week."

"He has fish hooks in his pockets," Eph said. "I know what he does with his old razor blades—he *shaves* with them. Ooch!"

Jerry had reached down and picked up Eph and now held him at arm's length over his head, looking

for a place to put him. Noticing a few inches of space between the top of a clothespress and the ceiling, he stuffed Eph into it, head first.

"This conversation," said Sam Purvis, scarcely looking up, "is beginning to bore me."

"It has bored me from the start," Jerry said.

"We did n't come here to discuss Mr. Legg's little ways. We came to take you to the Spring Dinner to-night. You're going to preside."

"Who says I'm going to preside?"

"We do."

"Well, I can't."

"Well, you will."

Sam stood up. Big as Jerry was, Sam overtopped him by half a head. He sparred at him with one hand, smiling—and received a love pat in the face that would have stunned little Eph Smith. Then both men sat down, looking pleased. The place where the Spring Dinner was to be held had not been mentioned. There was no need of mentioning it. The presence of the Glim Club hovered in all conversations among these four men.

"Call up Wee," said Sam Purvis, "and tell her that it's your last chance, as a single man."

"She's out of town. I want to work to-night."

"Work!"

Eph put crushing scorn into this word. He had wriggled around, and his head now protruded over the top of the clothespress. "Lie down and let me

dive on your stern and rockbound belly," he begged. "It used to be our best trick."

"Ah, be your age," Jerry said. He looked from Eph's face to Sam's, and suddenly all his affection for these men and for the Glim Club came flooding over him like a wave. He was among the men whose love for their college clubs is a passionate romance, lasting all their lives. And the Glim is a club worth loving, a club of clubs. He nodded his head.

"Our plan," said Sam, "is for you to dress at once. George will call for you and take you out. Eph and I will meet you there. Check?"

"Check," said Jerry, lifting Eph down tenderly by his ears. It was easy to float on this pleasant tide. Jerry suddenly realized that marriage need not be death to a man's friendships. Here were his friends rallying around him, at the moment when he needed them most.

"I want you and Eph to usher at my wedding," he called after Sam.

George did not go away with the others. He sat with Jerry in the window, watching the frowzy women keep their endless vigil in the tenement-house windows across the way. It was still too early to light the lamps, but the two men could hardly see each other in the shabby, shadowy room.

"You looked pretty acid when Uncle Roger was mentioned," George remarked.

"I'm trying my best to forget him," said Jerry. "Him and his deed of gift, too."

"Has he given birth to a deed of gift?"

"He has. It's Wee's, of course, and not mine—but she thought I ought to read it because I'm so prominently mentioned."

George leaned forward.

"I've never heard you speak in such a bitter tone of voice before," he said. "What's the matter, Jerry?"

But Jerry would not answer, and after a while George went on.

"You must n't let Mr. Legg get your goat," he said. "He's just a sample of a lot of old New Englanders—thrifty, careful old birds, whose main passion is saving money. It's their virtue. It's their religion. I know one old man who comes to town on a family ticket. He has his chauffeur race the train to the next station, so that he can throw out the ticket after it has been punched, and then his wife uses it on the next train. The saving is eight or nine cents, I suppose—and he gloats over it in just the way a New Yorker gloats over spending a thousand dollars. Mr. Legg is like that, I dare say."

Jerry only grunted. George looked at him anxiously through the dusk. "Would it make you feel any better," he asked, "if you let me see that deed?"

Jerry got up at once. Never in his life had he owned a paper that George could n't see. George Hamill was in the trust department of Carr & Daland, but he knew a lot about law. It was a hereditary shrewdness; his father, Ned Hamill, Gloucester born, was the leading lawyer of New York. Jerry took an impressive document from his drawer and said: —

"Read it if you like, George—but never speak to me about it again."

George turned on the light, and read aloud, skipping from section to section with loud, lawyerlike "h'm, h'm's."

"KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS," he began, "that WHEREAS my beloved niece—h'm, h'm—and WHEREAS I believe that the unrestricted possession of a large sum of money is detrimental to youth in general, in that it removes the incentive to a sober and industrious life;

"NOW THEREFORE I, ROGER LEGG of Boston, in the county of Suffolk and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby sell, assign, transfer, and set over to Peleg W. Allen and Seth S. Hathaway, and their successors in trust, hereinafter generally called 'my Trustees'—h'm, h'm—the property set forth and described in the schedule hereto annexed marked 'A,' said property having at the date hereof a market value of approximately \$10,000,000.00 . . ."

Jerry's naked figure appeared in the bathroom door.

"*Must* you?" he said, plaintively. "It gives me an earache."

"I'm boiling it down," said George. "I skipped a lot of stuff about 'the ennobling virtue of giving of your means generously to charity.' And I modestly omitted the clause about 'such children as may be from time to time brought forth.' Uncle Roger has a lot of confidence in you, Jerry—he looks forward to nine of them!"

"He said he had no confidence in me whatever," said Jerry, slipping into the tub. He lay there, trying to keep his ears under water, while George continued to read aloud.

"The share of the said Jeroboam—h'm, h'm—shall consist of the entire Trust Fund until such time as a child shall be born; thereupon and thereafter, as further children shall be born, my Trustees shall reduce—h'm, h'm—by an amount sufficient to establish a new share for each such child equal in principal amount to the other share or shares so reduced (excluding additions from accumulated income, but including any amounts of principal which may then have been expended as hereinafter permitted). Jeest!"

"What's that?" asked Jerry. "Did Mr. Legg use the expression Jeest?"

"I knew you had n't read this thing carefully,"

George said. "I'll read it to myself and translate it into plain language for you."

Ten minutes later he came to the bathroom door. Jerry was lying with his eyes closed and mouth open; George turned off the hot water and spoke in a loud clear voice, like a father to a child.

"You and Wee get a million dollars when you are married," he said, "and a million dollars when you bring forth each child, up to nine. But do you get the money? You do not. You ennoble yourself by donating to such institutions as are deemed bona fide and worthy not over five hundred dollars a year; and you can have forty dollars a week for medical and hospital expenses, if the Trustees deem you to be suffering from a major illness."

"I've got an earache already," Jerry remarked.

"Finally," said George, "when the youngest of Mr. Legg's grandnephews shall have attained the age of twenty-one years and nine months, the Trustees shall pay over the loot to them, free of any trust or restriction. Hot dog!"

"Well," said Jerry, "I think it's all right. I'm not looking for anything for myself, George. When I got engaged to Wee I thought she did n't have a cent. I went to tell her uncle that I'd work hard for her, all my life. He called me a penniless trifler, and my father a hedonist. I've looked up 'hedonist,' and it means a libertine, a debauchee. I

don't care about this deed, George. I don't want to see Mr. Legg again, ever. I'm going to tell him —"

"Hold everything!" said George Hamill, quickly. "I want you to do me a favor, Jerry. I'd like to keep this thing overnight and show it to my father. He's dining at the Glim to-night."

"What do you want to show it to him for?"

"He's a great lawyer—one of the best."

"I know that. But what can he do?"

"Maybe nothing at all. But this thing's bad, Jerry."

"How do you mean, bad? It provides for my children, if I make a botch of things, does n't it?"

"You won't make a botch, Jerry. But your children will. They'll never come to anything, with this thing hanging over them. It will turn them into little trustee-fed pups. Just one question, Jerry. Does Wee like this deed?"

"She loathes it."

George folded up the deed and put it in his pocket. He lay at full length on the window seat, while Jerry sorted out his evening clothes and brushed his dress coat. Short coats are never worn at Glim dinners.

"The deed's bad morally, Jerry. I can't help that. But I think it's bad legally, too. The restriction of the use of the legal interest is bad in itself, and it lasts for too long a period. Who drew this deed? Some old lawyer who is willing to work

for small fees? My father can shoot the whole thing full of holes. It's just like breaking a will. I'm not an estate lawyer, myself—"

"You talk just like one."

"I know what Mr. Legg was up to," George said. "He just wanted to lock up ten million dollars so that you could n't ever touch it, or Wee either. That's what he thinks of her! But he has overreached himself. The restriction on legal interest lasts longer than twenty-one years."

"Well," said Jerry, "I won't do a thing about it. If I tried to butt into a private matter between Wee and her uncle it would look as if I were trying to grab some money for myself."

"Would it?" George Hamill's earnest face was flushed, and he looked Jerry squarely in the eye. "You love Wee, and you want to make her happy. You don't like Mr. Legg. Why not take a shot at him? Not for yourself—for Wee. Let my father see the deed, anyway. He may be able to do something."

"And if he can," Jerry said, "I'll be a man who started a lawsuit between my wife and her own family."

"Applesauce," said George, cheerily. "Father never starts any lawsuits. He has n't been in a courtroom for twenty years."

VI

THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIAN GLEE

"You look like Tarzan of the Apes."

Eph Smith stood in the doorway. "You men are tardy," he said. "I came back to see that you could n't renig. You're growing soft, Jerry — soft and fat. Alas, for this gray shadow once a man, so glorious in his beauty and his strength! Cold are his wrinkled feet upon thy golden thresholds, O Miss Legg."

Jerry paid no attention to Eph, but put on his clothes. Into his lapel he put the emblem which all Glim men wear at dinners — a gold codfish so tiny that its diamond eyes are almost invisible, but with every microscopic fin and scale accurately modeled by the great French jeweler, Lalique. His silk waistcoat was of a peculiar dark red, like ancient wine. He followed his friends downstairs and got into George Hamill's blue car. Slowly George drove into Louisburg Square.

"Do you like Boston?" he said.

"I suppose," Jerry answered, "that you're going to give me your regular lecture. Well, at the

moment I don't like Boston. I want to go to New York."

"I wish I could get you to *see* this old Hill," George said. "You have no eye for picturesque beauty."

"Boloney," said Jerry. "I paint—I paint absolutely gorgeous water-color pictures, and I've sold one of them already."

"To whom?"

"None of your business. To an aunt. What do you mean, I don't see things?"

"You want to go to New York, because you think you'd like to be in a place with eight million people around you—a place that roars all day and all night. You'd see all those eight millions as bond buyers. See them? Why, you can smell them, Jerry. I've come home from New York and not been able to get the reek of it out of my nose for three days."

"Well," said Jerry, grudgingly. "Suppose I do want to go to New York sometime—is that a crime?"

"No. But you won't go there in the day coach, if I can help it."

George Hamill drove steadily toward Cambridge, along the Esplanade, lecturing meanwhile on the beauty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology buildings.

"Perfect models," he said, "for every factory in

America. Simplicity, good proportion, putting the windows in the right places—that does the trick. Jerry, are you glad you're going to be married?"

"You bet!"

"So am I. You've got the best girl in Boston. She has lots of spirit, Jerry."

"Don't I know it?"

"And you have spirit, too. I've seen you on the football field making Custer's last stand. Well, put your mind on this dinner. You are supposed to think about it just a little. It's the last time you'll ever preside."

"No married man can do that," Jerry agreed. "It's a wonder that Marrable, Dunch, and Pepoon—" he made a swift, almost imperceptible salute with his right hand—"did n't exclude married men from the Club, or make them wear badges of shame, or something."

"Marrable, Dunch, and Pepoon—" George's hand flickered up for half a second from the steering wheel—"should have prescribed a big, black M for 'married.' To match the scarlet letter, you know."

George parked the blue roadster on Mount Auburn Street, and the two men entered the Glim Club with that sense of awe which comes to all its members when they remember that it is the oldest club in the world.

The Glim was founded in 1658 by three Senior

Sophisters of Harvard, James Marrable, Wrestle Dunch, and Andrew Pepoon. It is exactly forty years older than the next most ancient club, White's in London. Needing relief from their theological studies,—Harvard in those days was a divinity school,—the founders built a comfortable log house on Cambridge Common, and planted the club tree which modern people have incorrectly called the "Washington Elm."

This historic cabin was moved in 1887 to the backyard of the Glim's large new house on Mount Auburn Street, where it serves as a museum for the antiquities that have overflowed the new clubhouse. Many Glim members, since 1658, have bequeathed their entire libraries, their silverware, furniture, and other collections to the Glim; and while the poorest of these objects have been weeded out from time to time, the club owns such interesting things as the original manuscript of *Hamlet*; the skull of King Charles I, showing the marks of the axe on the vertebræ; the Liberty Bell (a copy of which is exhibited at Philadelphia); and many other curiosities of practically priceless worth. Visitors are not admitted to see this collection. Many of the relics, like the five remaining casks of the brandy presented to the Glim by Napoleon, have practical as well as sentimental value.

All the curiosities were so well known to Jerry McCoy that he gave scarcely a glance at the shelves

and glass cabinets as he walked into the living room.

It was still early. There were only two or three men in the room. A former Ambassador to Russia waved to Jerry with his thin old hand. He was sitting in a leather armchair, reading a huge quarto volume—the eighteenth-century Betting Book of the Glim. Jerry knew some of its entries by heart; how vividly they brought to mind the stout hearts and good courage of the men who lived two hundred years ago.

Nov. 14th, 1716. Rev. Clargis bets Rev. Sinclair 10 shillings that he will kill a cat with his teeth at the cockpit, both hands to be tied behind him. *Won.*

Dec. 25th (Christmas Day), 1731. Sir George Lemming bets Rev. Felix Lee 5 guineas that he will ride three miles, walk three miles, and drink three bottles of rum in three hours. *Lost by 19 minutes.*

The abbreviation "Rev." in these entries, and in a hundred others still quainter, does not indicate that the bettor was a minister. It is the usual form of club salutation in the Glim, just as men in lesser clubs—the raw, new societies and fraternities that have less than a century of tradition behind them—address their fellow members as "Brother."

Jerry McCoy found rest in a leather chair so soft, so artfully stuffed, so mellowed by many decades of use, that he seemed to be floating, not sitting down.

"Will you take a whetting glass, sir?"

It was the voice of John Chiffinch, the styward. This word has never been debased, in the Glim Club, to its feeble modern form of "steward" or "Stuart." It is still pronounced and spelled in the way that shows its honorable derivation from "sty-ward," the warden of the sty. And it is a tradition, if not a by-law, of the Glim that each styward shall beget but a single son, who enters the club as a page boy and succeeds to the stywardship on his father's death. Through this wise provision, the office has been held since 1658 by a single family, and the present holder, John Chiffinch, is the ninth of his name to serve the Glim.

Nine Chiffinches! Almost three centuries of growing tradition. Jerry knew why this old club caressed his spirit, just as its faint odor of leather furniture, and old books, and cocktails being poured out in the bar, caressed his nostrils. He loved the old paintings on the walls, and the stuffed heads; most of the heads were of the rarest East African game, and the elephant head over the fireplace was superb. But Jerry liked the portraits best—the Romneys and Reynoldses and Gainsboroughs, and the magnificent group portrait by Van Dyck of Marrable, Dunch, and Pepoon. They had traveled together to Antwerp to pose for him. How long ago it seemed!

Under that masterpiece hung a small canvas that

fascinated Jerry still more—Raeburn's portrait of Stephen Sawner, a Glim member of the Class of 1686.

Raeburn had painted that picture long after Sawner's gallant death, it is true. But Raeburn had the aristocratic tradition; he knew how to put high breeding into a man's face, and dauntless courage into his eyes.

Sawner had needed his courage. He was a conspirator against King James II. Although a graduate of Harvard, and a resident of Salem, in his hour of deadly peril he galloped across country to find sanctuary in the Glim.

It was not the sheriff who came for him at last, but a squadron of horse. Their sergeant hammered on the door with his pistol butt, demanding admission in the king's name.

The styward of those days opened the door—honest John Chiffinch, first of his line.

"Visitors are *never* admitted to the club," he said with simple dignity, and closed the door. But the sergeant shouted that he would force an entrance if Sawner did not come out and give himself up.

Thereupon Stephen Sawner walked steadily out, followed by the undergraduate members, eleven in all. They were only boys. But boys were more intelligent and studious in those days, and could enter college at fourteen. These boys bore themselves like men; they looked so haughtily at the

troopers that the men reined back, and the sergeant saluted.

"Have you a warrant for Mr. Sawner's arrest?" asked William Venum, the head of the Glim. Even at that time its president was known as "senior dory," a term borrowed from the fishing fleet.

The sergeant pulled a paper from his pocket. "I have it here," he said, "and there's a price on his head."

"Then, by God," said Stephen Sawner, "I am as worth catching dead as alive!"

He whispered into Venum's ear, and Venum advanced and spoke to the sergeant again.

"The Glim Club is not above the law," he said, and the words have become proverbial among Harvard men everywhere. "But Mr. Sawner has applied for trial by his peers."

The sergeant was a hard-bitten man who had seen and done many low things in the Low Countries, but he was cowed by Venum's tone and words.

"Very good, your worship," he said.

"You shall hear from us at our convenience," promised Venum, leading the members back into the club.

They sat down in the living room. Venum and Sawner took places side by side on the great oak settle in front of the fire. So little did the group differ from the ordinary after-dinner groups in the

club that the styward came unbidden with long clay pipes and rum. Venum waved him away and said, "The meeting will come to order."

There was a breathless hush in the room as Venum turned to Sawner and asked four tactful words: "Are you innocent, Steve?"

A weak man would have tried to excuse himself. Sawner could have appealed to the known prejudices of the members; they were no lovers of Stuart kings. But he was strong. He shook his head.

"I must surrender and be hanged," he said.

"That," said Venum, "would bring the club into serious disrepute."

All the solemn young faces in the room expressed agreement. From the corner came an intelligent suggestion: —

"Mr. Chairman, I move you that we accept Mr. Sawner's resignation *before* he is hanged."

There were murmurs of "I second the motion," and "Good!" but Venum silenced them with the statement that no Glim member had ever resigned.

"It is against precedent," he said, "and I feel that even in the next world Mr. Sawner will desire to continue his membership in the Glim. As we cannot permit him to be publicly executed before a gaping mob, no doubt his own good sense will —"

There was a pause. Sawner broke it at last.

"Pray ask the styward if there is such an article as a loaded pistol in the club," he said quietly.

Vernum beamed at him. "I think we can unanimously thank Mr. Sawner for his excellent club spirit," he said. "Is there any further discussion? If not, I will adjourn the meeting; no doubt Mr. Sawner will prefer to be left alone."

The members rose at once to go out, appalled by Sawner's doom. But Sawner bore himself gallantly. He flicked his boot with his riding whip, and looked around with a steady eye.

"It is a tradition of the Glim to drink a stirrup cup to a member about to take a long journey," he said.

Vernum flushed. He was only sixteen. He had outfaced the brutal sergeant, he had successfully conducted a difficult meeting, and had convinced a much older man of the propriety of killing himself. But he had forgotten the stirrup cup; and it was with a touch of mortification that he rang for the styward. Large rummers were brought in.

Several members reached for the check, but Sawner was too quick for them. He started to sign his name, but dropped the pen when he remembered that a man about to blow out his brains should always pay cash. He gave two gold coins to Chiffinch; they are framed in the Glim library now.

"No change, thank you," he said, softly. "I will now propose our first Glim toast. God bless Marrable, Dunch, and Pepoon."

Vernum gave the response: "And make us worthy of them. Amen."

They drank; and then, against the protests of a few members who were still sickened by Sawner's fate, or who were expecting to study later in the evening, Vernum ordered the rummers refilled to the brim. "Your stirrup cup now," he said.

"But I shall give this toast," Sawner exclaimed. His face had gone ashen white, and so had his lips, but his hand was firm as he held up his glass.

"Long journeys and happy reunions," he said. "A bumper to the Glim! In this world or the next one, a bumper to the Glim."

They drank again, and left him; and presently the crack of the pistol in the living room told them he had left them, too. The horses of the troopers plunged when Chiffinch carried his body out, with the wine-red Glim scarf fluttering at his throat.

Stephen Sawner had not only saved his club from discredit but had given it material for a song; and his last words, metricized by a Glim poet and set to special music by Johann Sebastian Bach, are sung at all spring dinners when another graduating class leaves the Glim, and Harvard too.

Jerry McCoy hummed the song softly. Its tune creaked with age, but the brave words were always new.

It was soothing to sit in this big, glowing, gorgeous room and remember all the history behind the

Glim. James Marrable killed a mountain lion in its lair, with his bare hands, after a struggle lasting two nights and a day. Dunch and Pepoon gave him a dinner that lasted over the same period of time. Men must have been stronger then, and better able to bear exertion and risk. But the Glim Club always prefers men of athletic ability when that is combined with social importance. It is by no means unusual for the Harvard crew to be made up of Glim members alone.

"I've made a discovery," said the former Ambassador, coming to Jerry's chair. "The word 'Glim' is cut on the tombstones of our earliest members. I've found it in the old graveyards at Ipswich and Newburyport."

"There is a special tombstone for all of us, designed for the Glim by Canova. . . ."

"I know *that*," said the old man, testily. "I'm speaking of seventeenth-century stones. The letters are cut into the lower edge of the stone, not on its face. The superintendent of one cemetery made quite a hullabaloo when he found me uprooting several stones to make sure."

This antiquarian zeal charmed Jerry.

"You were senior dory of the club in 1880, were n't you?"

"I was. Nothing else ever gave me so much satisfaction in my life."

Jerry rested, in his chair. The room was filling

up. The undergraduate members—known as “postulants” until they become seniors—were coming in, looking peculiarly pink-faced and young.

“Father,” said George Hamill, suddenly reappearing, “will be in the bar.”

Ned Hamill’s burly figure towered above a cluster of his friends in that shrine. He had a broad red face, and a beaky nose, and his handclasp was soft but strong. George wanted to give him Roger Legg’s deed at once, so that he could break it before dinner. That was impossible. But there was something in Ned Hamill’s personality, a suggestion of calm, devastating force, that convinced anyone near him that he invariably got just what he wanted.

What he wanted now was a whetting glass—a double Martini cocktail—and he was roaring for it in the loud, bellowing gurgle of a sea lion at feeding time.

“Reverend Hamill,” he said to his son. “And you, too, Reverend McCoy! If you have any influence with Chiffinch, now is the time for it. Ah-h-h!”

He bent his rubicund face over his cocktail, gleaming pale yellow in a glass so vast that the olive looked as small as a pea.

“Cocktails are a depraving habit,” he gurgled, when he came up for air. “I never touch them in

New York—but this club's where I keep my youth."

Others, fifty or sixty others, were walking around the rooms with these giant whetting glasses in their hands. Some were old men, who came from all over America and the world for dinners at the Glim. Finally the senior dory, Dickson by name, took Jerry's arm and led the way upstairs, preceded by Chiffinch, Jr., playing the flute.

The banquet hall, on the top floor, was designed and furnished to resemble an early Colonial meeting house. The floor was sanded, and strewn with rushes. Shutters of hand-hewn timber covered the windows. At the head of the table sat wax effigies of the Founders, executed for the Glim in 1795 by that insufficiently admired genius, Madame Tussaud.

When each man was in his chair, the junior dory led in a blindfolded sophomore, the only young man of his class who had been deemed worthy that year of election to the Glim.

"Reverend Marrable," said the junior dory, "I present to you this person to be sworn."

Swiftly the senior dory administered the oath, with its pledge of allegiance in this world and the next to the "Invisible Colledge for the Propagation of Christian Glee." Then the blindfold was removed, and the sophomore looked into the incredibly lifelike visages of Marrable, Dunch, and Pepoon.

They sat at their ease, rummers in hand, and a huge boiled codfish in front of them; and he stared at them in reverent surprise until, from musicians concealed in the cardroom, came the first immortal bars of "Propagation," composed by Franz Schubert for the Glim. Voices took up the song all over the room, disproving (or possibly confirming) the well-known axiom that Harvard men cannot sing.

The effigies were wheeled away in their chairs, and the dinner proceeded. Jerry's part was to see that the old forms were preserved. As the old forms never survived the soup, his task was an easy one. He had no speakers to introduce. No one has ever been allowed to speak at a Glim dinner. There was an embarrassing moment at the dinner given on the day when George Washington took command of the American army under the Glim tree, and had the further distinction of being elected the only honorary member of the Glim. Reverend Washington rose wearily and mechanically to his feet after his health was proposed. But the senior dory pulled him promptly down by his coat tails. "A devilish sensible custom," grunted the general, and the members have agreed with him to this day.

"Wine with you, Reverend McCoy," called a few of the old men, from different parts of the room. Faces grew flushed as the champagne succeeded the sauterne, and in turn gave way to the port. Some men went out and took naps on the sofas downstairs.

Other gaffers complained that the young men were not drinking enough. Paul Revere's silver plates were used for the salad, and a few drops from Napoleon's gift of brandy were served after dessert.

It was early, not yet three o'clock, when Jerry went out. All the wrinkles in his soul had been charmed away. Over the Gold Coast a full moon was riding down the western sky. Cambridge was sleeping; its ten thousand students only stirred on their pillows when an occasional reveler threw a melancholy yodel toward the moon. Jerry had left all his cares behind him. He had even forgotten Roger Legg. But George Hamill had found a chance, late in the evening, to slip Roger Legg's malevolent deed into his father's soft, strong hands.

VII

A FRIEZE OF STORKS

FOR three weeks Jerry continued to sell bonds. People were leaving Boston and Boston's suburbs for the summer, and sales were few. Wee made cautious plans for the wedding. She hoped it could be in November, at Aunt Carrie's little Marlboro Street house. Only intimate friends could be invited. She wished they could be married in the summer house at Marblehead, but it was not possible to open it. There were so many other expenses. She needed time to get ready—to have her clothes remodeled by Miss Rooney, the clever little old sewing woman who came by the day. And Wee had to find a home. She thought that Newtonhurst might do.

On a pleasant afternoon, with only a threat of east wind and clouds, she took Jerry to see this desirable home community.

No. 42, Newtonhurst Terrace Gardens, proved to be one of a clotted mass of small, English-type homes, breaking out like a rash in a cow pasture that had been carefully denuded of trees.

The agent came bounding out of his office with

honeyed words. "You are as welcome as flowers in May," he began. "The builder of these pretentious homes was saying to me only yesterday, 'Mr. Rainbird, we want you to extend special curtsies to young married couples. Even if they're not wealthy, treat 'em like kings and queens.'" He shot an appraising glance, sidelong, at Wee's car. "I know how it is," he said. "I bought No. 40 myself before the workmen had so much as cut down the big tree that stood on that lot before we improved it. A man wants to make his home in God's great out-of-doors, where the kiddies can run wild with the birds and the bumblebees. Have you a little stranger in your home, yet?"

"Not quite yet," said Wee.

"The stork is busy around here all the time," said Mr. Rainbird, encouragingly. "Now the first thing I want you to notice is the big baronial hall, two stories high, with massive log-burning fireplace, and French doors opening on to impressive Traver-tined patio."

"Would you mind," asked Jerry, suddenly, "if we look at this house by ourselves?"

Mr. Rainbird seemed hurt.

"You could n't appreciate it," he said. "There's refinements so new, including the ventilated shower stalls, that people just don't know what they are until I explain."

"Could n't you explain them later?" asked Wee.

"I suppose this is quite a sacred moment for you," admitted Mr. Rainbird, "if this is your first home. Be sure to notice the domed diningette adjoining large butler's pantry. It would save time if I showed you these features myself."

Jerry picked at one of the enormous iron nail-heads on the door. It came off and fell with a gentle tinkle on the steps.

"Please wait outside," said Wee.

"I'll be right here, listening for you, little lady," said Mr. Rainbird. "When you see something you don't understand, just call, and I'll be right in."

The big baronial hall was about fourteen feet square, with a spider web of imitation rafters at the top. There was a little den for the master behind the *art nouveau* chimney piece of plaster, painted to imitate stone. Plumbing fixtures adorned the den.

"You could hang your group photographs of clubs and crews here," said Wee. "There won't be room for your trophy oar, but you can have a stuffed football on the mantelpiece."

Jerry felt like an elephant in a doghouse. He trailed after Wee down the basement steps, hitting his head as he did so. He saw the gas and electric meters, and the cunning little gas boiler—Kole-Savo Baby No. A. Then he followed Wee up to the second floor, and saw the diminutive bedrooms with casement windows, and dull bronze colonial

hardware. He visited the large closet which he could use as a dressing room, with nickel-plated trouser press already provided.

"This house is rather small," said Wee. "I don't believe the architect ever saw an English country house, do you? But things are not badly arranged. When all this paper and plaster is swept up, and we get the broken bricks and mortar off the grounds, and plant some grass, it will look much better. Do you think it's a nice little house, Jerry?"

"I think," said Jerry, slowly, "that it's absolutely bum."

A pause followed. Wee went to a window, and worked its brass push rod two or three times, stopping when it broke in her hands. Then she touched a switch, and the electric lights kindled into the feeble glow they have by day. She turned on the taps in the bathroom, and a gush of dirty water splashed into the tub.

Tricks, tricks, nothing but tricks! Tricks to keep one's courage up, facing the prospect of living in this dismal little box. Tiles of Travertined rubber, and a nickel-plated trouser press. Electric outlets in all the baseboards—yes, you need plenty of outlets when you cook your own food, and press your own pants, and use an electric heating pad instead of telling a servant to bring you a hot-water bottle.

Jerry looked into the nearest room. It had a frieze of storks. It must be the nurseryette. He could smell a baby's food stewing odoriferously on an electric stove. That was imagination. No, it was n't—it was coming from the corresponding window of the next English-type home, an exact duplicate, only a few feet away. That was why the bathroom had ground-glass windows—to keep you from seeing Mrs. Rainbird in her bath. The ground-glass panes had a lily pattern. Jerry went into the bathroom, and traced a lily with his thumb.

Wee looked at him anxiously. His bulk filled the little room; it seemed to fill the whole house. She remembered how he had hit his head on the basement stairs. She wondered if he would always hit it there, night after night, year after year.

"I think it's awful, too," she said. "I was going to make the best of it, if you liked it. The price is so low that we could afford a maid, and a woman to come in once a week and clean."

"Could we?"

"But we need n't take this house," said Wee. "We will look at apartments on Beacon Hill. Many old houses have been done over into two- and three-room apartments. They are just what you like, Jerry. They have high ceilings, and marble mantelpieces, and the look of respectability. Of course, they are impossible if one has children, but —"

Her voice broke. Jerry realized that she did n't

want a dingy apartment any more than she wanted this hideous little hutch, this travesty of an English country house.

"What do I care for the look of respectability?" he said. "We're going to get away from here, Wee—we're going to New York."

She had begun to cry softly, dabbing at her dark eyes with a handkerchief. A gust of rage shook Jerry to his heels. Who had made her cry? Uncle Roger—Uncle Roger, with his ostentatious economies, his grandiloquent thrift. Uncle Roger was keeping her money away from her. Uncle Roger, with seventy million dollars in mortgages and bonds, and with a piece of newspaper—of second-hand newspaper—between his knees!

"Listen to me," he said savagely. "You are n't going to live in this coop, or in a ratty old apartment house either. I've got a little money and the promise of a job in New York. Let's get married to-morrow, and go over there."

"But where," asked Wee, "can we live in New York?"

Jerry knew that New Yorkers who earned less than a hundred dollars a week lived somehow in apartments near Washington Heights or in boxlike little homes on Long Island—Spanish-type homes. But he could not speak. He stepped suddenly forward and took Wee in his arms.

"Well, little lady," came Mr. Rainbird's voice

from the big baronial hall. "All serene and happy, eh? I thought I heard you laughing together up there."

He came up the stairs, and Wee met him bravely on the landing.

"The house is everything you say about it," she lied. "But we don't think we can afford it. We — we are thinking of going to New York."

"My God," said Mr. Rainbird. "If you can't afford a house here, what do you think they'll do to you in New York?"

He shook his finger at them.

"I was going to suggest that we'd take your car as part of the first payment," he added. "But I've been *looking* at the car."

Wee laughed nervously, for fear Jerry might reply. But Jerry's spirit was gone. He felt beaten. It was as if a knight-errant in the old days, trying to rescue a maiden from a dragon, had received a complete and unmerciful thrashing for his pains.

"Shall we go back to town now?" said Wee. "Don't look so cross, Jerry. Even if we have to look forward to a long engagement, there are worse things."

"What are the worse things?" Jerry asked.

He drove the car toward Boston. He had not heard Mr. Rainbird's last words. Mr. Rainbird had invited him to say whether he had any life

insurance, or any other valuable thing. If so, the owner of Newtonhurst Terrace Gardens would treat him like a prince. "Just give him something as evidence of good faith," urged Mr. Rainbird. "This development is a hobby, rather than a cold business proposition — some people say it's a charity, even."

But his words rebounded from Jerry's ears. Wee had stopped crying. She was making fresh plans.

"We could live," she suggested, "with my Aunt Caroline."

Jerry flushed. That suggestion was the last straw. He had offered to rescue Wee from the shabbiness in which she lived — and all he could do about it was to crawl in under her roof. No! He would not do that. He would not condemn her to the Newtonhurst horror, or to a tiny apartment in Boston; but still less would he become a pensioner on her aunt. What could he do? There was only one thing.

"I'm sorry," he began, searching desperately for words. "I did n't know how much — how much it costs to live. I should n't have spoken to you at all. The only thing is to ask you to forget all about me. I won't bother you any more. Of course we can't live in that hutch, or in anything else I can afford. So you won't see me any more."

"Do I understand," asked Wee, "that you are jilting me?"

He paused, and his flush deepened. He was not jilting her. On the contrary, he was releasing her from an impossible situation. He was doing the only honorable thing that he could. He wanted to make that clear. Before he could make it even partly clear, the car gave one pathetic wheeze, like the sob of a wounded horse, and died.

"That's the end of this bus," said Wee. "You can't mend it, Jerry. Well, where do we go from here?"

"I hope you understand what I've been saying," Jerry said. "I know you won't want to see me any more."

"Oh, that!" said Wee. "You certainly are n't going to abandon me here in the road. I'm surprised, Jerry. You'll have to take me home."

He pushed the car into the grass by the roadside, and its rear end collapsed with a loud and melancholy clank.

"Just like the One-Hoss Shay," remarked Wee. "It's all falling apart at once. No, we certainly can't take a taxi. There's a car line not more than a mile from here."

She got out, and took hold of his sleeve.

"Walk a little faster, Jerry," she said, after they had plodded a hundred yards. "It's beginning to rain."

Jerry put his fingers over hers, and then snatched his hand away. He wondered if there is any way

to end an engagement without telling a girl brutally that you do not love her. And he loved Wee more than ever! That was what made it so unreal, so impossible. Unreal or not, it had to be done. He set his teeth.

"I'm not jilting you, Wee," he said. "But you'll have to stop seeing me, or thinking about me. I can't give you anything—"

She looked at him out of the corner of her eye. He had pushed his hat down over his eyes, and he was striding so fast that she had to run to keep up with him.

"You've given me so much," she said, "that I suppose I can't ask you for any more."

"Given you so much!" said Jerry.

"You gave me confidence in myself," she answered, panting a little as she ran.

"I can't even keep you out of the rain," said Jerry, "except in a hutch—or a tenement."

"But if we ran a little faster," gasped Wee, "we could catch the next trolley."

He followed her into it.

"It's a pleasant surprise," he said grimly, "to find that I've got carfare."

They rode to Massachusetts Avenue in silence, through a drizzle of rain.

"This has n't been one of the best afternoons," said Wee, as they walked to her Aunt Caroline's house. "I've lost my respect for Uncle Roger as

an adviser on homes. I've lost my car. And I've lost you."

Jerry wanted to kneel in the street, and tell her that if she could still care for him at all she could have him through all the agonies of a long engagement. But he bit his tongue, and strode on. He wondered how to say good-bye to her, at her front door. But that emergency did not occur.

A big and burly figure was standing on the doorstep, talking to Norah. Then he turned and came down the steps.

"It's McCoy," he gurgled. "Run away now, McCoy. I have something private to discuss with Miss Legg."

Jerry shook hands uncomprehendingly with Ned Hamill. He watched the front door close. Squaring his shoulders, he walked away into the teeth of an easterly gale.

An hour later, Wee called him on the telephone. He was not at home.

"Don't you know where he is?" she asked the janitor's wife. "Tell him to call Miss Legg the minute he comes in. Better still, take a message for him. This is important, and I want you to listen very, very carefully. Tell Mr. McCoy that he has half a million dollars, and that Miss Legg will marry him at Marblehead exactly three weeks from to-day."

VIII

EPITHALAMIUM

"PUT your hand on that large leather book," said Wee. "No, not on the family photograph album. On the Bible. Now promise that you'll entirely stop talking about money, once and for all."

"Almost entirely," said Jerry. "I hope to make some money of my own."

"How selfish of you, Jerry!" she said.

A wave of contrition swept over him. He was beginning to believe the fantastic, the incredible story she had told him. Ned Hamill had broken the deed. Uncle Roger had consented to pay over the first million dollars immediately. It was unbelievable; but here stood Wee, in bedroom slippers, telling him the story at three o'clock in the morning. He could have given it better attention if she had n't laughed so much.

"It seems," she said, "that Uncle Roger saved a little money by having the deed drawn by an old lawyer who is rather weak in the head. Mr. Hamill persuaded him that it would be very, very expensive to have a lawsuit. And then it came out that Uncle

Roger was far from happy about creating trustees for this fund. Being a trustee himself, he is scared of all others. Apparently trustees are as snooty about each other as dentists. So Uncle Roger agreed to turn over the first million dollars to me. He said he could do it with a quiet mind, because I have been so thriftily trained —”

She shrieked. Her flannel-clad shoulders were shaking in uncontrollable mirth.

“Jerry, I will *not* let you beat me on the back,” she gasped. “I can’t stop, and I don’t want to stop. It isn’t the B-b-boston part of me that’s laughing; it’s the other part. It was nice of you to come right over when you got my message. How do you like my wrapper and nightie?”

“I had n’t noticed,” he said.

“They are of the practical and common-sense sort that would n’t be noticed,” she sighed. “What have you been doing all night?”

“I don’t know. Walking round and round the Basin, I believe.”

“Contemplating suicide?”

“It can’t be done there,” said Jerry.

“How do you know?”

“I measured.”

“But suppose you bent over, and did n’t cheat,” said Wee. “However, that’s all over now. You’ve got half a million dollars. Yes, you have. Mr. Hamill is drawing the deed himself, and it’s an

unbreakable one. Remember, Jerry—you swore on the Bible that you would n't talk about money."

"Do you think I'd take it?" he asked.

"You *have* taken it," said Wee. "It's in the Federal Trust Company, in your name. Ah, Jerry, don't look so cross! Do you know, you're really a very difficult young man? This afternoon you wanted to jilt me because you and I were poor—and if I let you talk about money now you'd walk out of the house because we're both rich. George Hamill told me you'd be like that. Unworldly, chivalrous, all those noble things! So I've made all the arrangements. Now listen to me."

She sat down on the horsehair sofa, smoothing down her Jaeger wrapper over her ankles.

"Concentrate, Jerry," she said. "Put your great mind on one thought. No—you must n't touch me. We are going to be married just three weeks from to-day. And it's going to be a real wedding, Jerry. I've done a number of things since Mr. Hamill went away. I've ordered the invitations engraved, and the house at Marblehead opened, and I've called up eight girls for bridesmaids, and sent a notice to the Herald. Now you must make your own arrangements. Ushers, Jerry. Clothes, if you need any—and you certainly do. Plans for the wedding trip. No, you're not practical enough for that. I'll do that for you. Who's your best man?"

"I—I suppose it will be George Hamill."

"Have him here early in the morning," said Wee.

"Oh, never mind the rotten old bond business, Jerry. You are n't going to peddle any more bonds."

"Are n't I?"

"Only if it amuses you," said Wee. "It seems a pretty low form of sport to me. Tell Caleb Spinney you're going to take an indefinite vacation. Two weeks? Well, I should say not. It's indecent to be married so fast, Jerry. Tell him to expect you when he sees you. Let's wake him up now."

She reached across him for the telephone, but he kept it away from her.

"That steward from your club," she said, "would lend a pleasing touch of color to the wedding."

"Styward," said Jerry.

"Excuse me," said Wee. "I think the Glim Club is a wonderful institution. Mr. Hamill says it's always ready to help a member in distress. Jerry, I think you'd better go home. This midnight scene reminds me of the annunciation of Calvin Coolidge, up in Vermont. He took the oath in the same kind of a parlor, too."

"If you're going to have another fit," Jerry said, "I'll get some water to throw on you."

"Go home and get a drink instead," said Wee. "It must have been very cold and shivery, walking around the Esplanade. One more unfortunate, weary of breath, rashly importunate, fooling with

death. Thank God you're so tall, Jerry—and so divinely dumb. You might have put rocks in your pocket, and lain bravely down."

He flung his big arms around her.

"It's all right, Jerry," she said. "If you can love me in this old brown wrapper, you can love me in anything. Come to breakfast at eight, and we'll make some careful plans."

Jerry patted her. Under the dark brown wrapper she felt as soft and as small as a child. But there was nothing childish in her eyes. They blazed with determination. It was a new Wee—a Wee full of purpose. Jerry tore himself away at last, and trudged home in a daze.

In the morning, when his alarm clock sent its wicked spikes of clamor through his stupefied brain, he thought he must have dreamed that scene with Wee. But Ned Hamill's voice over the telephone was real enough. In great gurgling chuckles he confirmed the fact that he had dragged a million dollars out of Roger Legg's claws.

Jerry thanked him as best he could. It seemed dismally inadequate to say, "I'm much obliged, Ned." But that is what he said, adding, "On Wee's account, of course." The conversation was brief. Jerry wondered if he could bring up the question of a fee. He hung up the receiver without doing so; it was really too queer to be acknowledging the receipt of an enormous sum in one's bare feet, in

one's shabby lodging house, with the paper peeling off the bedroom walls.

He breakfasted with Wee. She was writing down a list of things to be done, on a long slip of white paper that squirmed on her lap like ticker tape.

Jerry's preparations were quickly made. He dismantled his room. Two years before he had bought some nice-looking antique furniture on Charles Street. Now he sold it—a desk, a bureau, and a couple of chairs—to a Mr. Max Grabowski from the same thoroughfare. Mr. Grabowski's bid was \$17.35. "Junk," he said, cheerfully. "No—I would n't have those cushions as a gift. Listen, gentleman! In the antique business the mark-up is 700 per cent. I could n't kiss my own mother good-night if I paid more than \$17.35."

Jerry sighed, and sent his trophy oar to Sam Purvis's house, to be kept till called for, together with the Benson etching of wild fowl, with its broken glass.

How little a man really needs! Jerry looked over his suits, and saw that they were too old, too spotted and shiny, to be taken on a wedding trip. There was no time to have anything made. He went to Brooks Brothers and bought a blue flannel suit, and one of Lovat tweed. He bought three changes of underclothes and pajamas. His collars, handkerchiefs, and shirts would have to do. A man

must n't be too smart, or people will know he's a bridegroom.

A steamer trunk held all his clothes, and his two thick sweaters—the white one of the crew, the black one of the football team, each with its great red "H." In their heavy folds he laid his mother's photograph, in its silver frame. Under her heavy wedding veil of 1899 her eyes smiled at him; and he smiled back, wishing he had known her, and hummed: "Give me a girl just like the girl who married dear old Dad!"

Cheap words, and a cheap tune. He frowned, and went out and bought a pair of white spats, noticing as he tried them on how enormously they magnified the size of his feet. Then he went to Cambridge, and ordered from Chiffinch eight gold snuffboxes for his ushers—the traditional gift of a Glim bridegroom to his friends. He ordered new club neckties for them too; the special thirty-five-dollar ties of royal purple silk which was once worn by Roman emperors and now by Glim members alone.

Fishermen still search for the murex on the rocks where ancient Tyre stood, and send their entire catch of a few hundred shellfish a year to a certain family of French silk weavers in Lyons who make the wine-dark silk for the Glim. It is the club's link with ancient Rome. But Jerry thought of John Keats as he bought the imperial ties. "Who

fished the murex up?" he quoted softly, and his hand rose in salute to Marrable, Dunch, and Pepoon.

He returned to find Mr. Grabowski talking with the janitor's wife, Mrs. Toole.

"Ain't you goin' to clean out your desk?" asked the dealer. "My truck's coming any minute."

On top of the desk the impressed Mrs. Toole had laid a clipping from the Boston American's society page. "Wee Legg Plans Gorgeous Society Wedding" was the headline, and under it was the statement that society from Boston, New York, and New Brunswick would attend in force. Who was the society person from New Brunswick? Jerry smiled as he remembered that he had given Wee the name of his old nurse. She was past eighty, and bedridden—but she would love the invitation. He sat down and threw the papers from his desk drawers into his undersized scrap basket.

There were no letters from girls—only a few short notes from Wee. He put them in his steamer trunk under his collars. He threw away a lot of papers from the office—old bond circulars. Jerry had asked Mr. Spinney for an indefinite leave of absence only that morning, and Mr. Spinney had granted it with an almost invisible nod. Jerry was through with bond selling for a long, long time; but the circulars reminded him of his battles of salesmanship. Trumpets from those battles sounded

faintly in his ears as he stuffed the circulars into his basket.

Bay State Cotton Petticoat 4s. Even Mr. Daland had called that issue difficult to sell; and Jerry had failed to sell a single Bay State Bond. He was not sorry. But here was another of those interesting Central American issues—the \$3,000,000 Banco Agricola Hipotecario of Guatemala. Jerry had one of his usual flights of fancy. He closed his eyes and saw barefooted Guatemalan farmers swinging machetes in the jungle, while happy Boston investors enjoyed the 6 per cent usufruct from their toil.

That is the bond business; a fascinating chance for flights of the imagination. What to do with your November funds? Put them where they will transform howling jungles into neat little banana farms. Money will clear away the giant ferns and the horrible creepers that swing from the trees. Money puts dynamos under the waterfalls, and money builds factories—cotton-petticoat factories! Bay State Cotton Petticoats, “white as the driven snow.” Where is that petticoat factory now? Sunk in the mud of the river that turned its wheels? How those wheels whirled and roared in the brave days when every woman wore two or three petticoats. Why don’t women wear them now, and give the Merrimac bondholders a run for their money—the money they paid for those bonds which

were just the thing for widows and orphans only twenty years ago?

Jerry straightened himself, with a queer little shiver, as Mr. Grabowski and his truck driver carried out the desk. Jerry saw a chapter of his life closing. Only yesterday he had been a bond salesman in splendid standing. It had seemed to be interesting, dignified work. Just the sort of work for a college man, a leader among the men of the proudest college of all. And now, for some reason, bond selling seemed undignified, and unworthy of a man's highest ambitions. What had Barnham Dunn written? The man who sells bonds is the ambassador of prosperity, the herald of progress and thrift.

In a pig's eye, he is!

Jerry muttered these iconoclastic words aloud; and then he smiled a little, because the desk was gone, and his old life was gone too. His wedding was so much in the forefront of his mind that he could not look beyond it. Yes, he could! He could look down an endless vista of years and see himself doing innumerable delightful things with Wee.

He could see himself breakfasting with her. He would be wearing his new Lovat tweeds—no, the new blue flannel, ready to go down to an office and make money all day. He would make much more money than in the past, because he would be making it for Wee. But he would work at a desk, somewhere

in New York; he would not trudge around to find people who could be cajoled into buying Central American bonds. And every day before work he would read the newspaper aloud to Wee; one of the wonderful New York newspapers, full of news so much more vital and important than the Boston press can find.

Perhaps still another Long Island wife would have sent her husband into a happier world. Wee would be mildly thrilled by a *crime passionnel*. But she was serious-minded, too. She would enjoy hearing about New York City's seething life. Sewer grab. Fare grab. Hospital grab. Paving grab. Power grab. Crowd mourns at yegg's funeral. District Attorney's office moves against salacious plays. Whiskey diet healthful, says octogenarian. Proceedings of the League of Nations at Geneva. Firm stand against opium and white-slave trade. Sensational speech of Dr. Arturo Bustillo of Bogota; equally moving response of Lord Robert Cecil. Balkan states on eve of war . . .

How thrilling and new it would be! How quickly Jerry and Wee would feel themselves part of the boiling life of New York! And the evenings. He looked forward eagerly to the evenings. The theatre—the superb New York theatre, most lavish in the world, with so many brilliant artists—Ed Wynn, Elliot Cabot, Ann Pennington. And there would be quiet evenings at home; Wee would be

sewing little white garments, or crocheting a tiny spread for a baby's bed. He put the thought aside. It returned to haunt him, and he charmed it away by thinking of the books he would read aloud—Keyserling, Spengler, all the men who count.

Jerry built up this attractive picture till darkness filled his dismantled room. He washed his hands, and the bathroom exercised its peculiar sorcery. He sang aloud, and he was still singing when he clattered down the rough brick sidewalk of Revere Street, to dine alone. Friends would have spoiled his mood. He went to the Shawmut Sanitary Kitchen on Charles Street, a restaurant which catered to elderly spinsters of both sexes.

"Beef stew or schrod?" asked the waitress, hoping that this handsome young man would stop singing and make up his mind. "Schrod or beef stew?" she asked, five minutes later, classifying him as a harmless "mental" who had eluded his keeper.

"Bring me larks' tongues and champagne," ordered Jerry, absurdly. "I am going to be married in just eleven days."

IX

THE END OF A CHINA PIG

WEE's preparations took much longer.

Her neat room in Aunt Caroline's house had cupboards and clothespresses all along the walls. The house itself was older than closets. Wee started by taking out the doll house which had belonged to her mother. She kissed the dolls, one by one, and saw that they had their best clothes on, with plenty of camphor in the clothes, and in the tiny drawers of the dolls' bureaus. She sewed up little rips in their gowns. And then, drawing a long breath, she looked round the room.

All her own clothes, from her childhood, were in the cupboards and chests. Carefully brought up Puritan ladies do not throw their old clothes away, or give them to servants and poor relations unless there is real need. Wee had only one servant, and had no poor relations at all.

She opened the doors of the presses, and pulled her dresses out.

"Leave them all here, just as they are," urged Aunt Caroline. "Styles have a way of coming around again, and it is wonderful what a little

remodeling can do. This room will not be touched. If you are a true daughter of your family, you will keep everything."

Wee smiled, knowing that her aunt was often a little sarcastic about the Legg economies. Aunt Carrie was thrifty enough in her own right. But it was the thrift of Providence, rather than of Boston—a more rakish kind of carefulness, a spirit that sometimes put fresh tea leaves into the pot instead of more hot water.

"Everything will be quite safe here," said Aunt Carrie. "I will keep this room for you always, and you can keep your things here—though I really doubt if you'll ever wear those long woolen underclothes again."

Wee looked at the offending shirts and drawers.

"You can bet I won't wear them again," said Wee. "Nor those foul cotton-crêpe underclothes."

"Those were sensible enough," her aunt replied. "They did n't have to be ironed, but merely washed and dried."

"Damn it!" Wee's tone was petulant, and it was almost the first time she had ever sworn in her aunt's presence. "Damn and blast it, Aunt Carrie, could n't we afford a washerwoman two days a week?"

The old lady made no reply, but sat with lips compressed as she watched Wee flinging her old Ferris Good Sense waists on the sofa and dropping

a huge pile of yellowing cotton garments on top of them. Then came a little white swan's-down muff and tippet and the red knitted hood she had worn, at eleven, when skating on the Public Garden pond. Her little flannel petticoats with crocheted lace were all preserved, too. Her old stockings, neatly darned, were done up in balls. She threw these at random around the room, afterward kicking them into a heap in the corner.

"Here's the first candy box I ever received," she said, "and inside it are a lot of red and green ribbons off Christmas presents. Some old woman once told me to save them to run into my nighties—a grand idea, was n't it? I suppose I could have pressed them on Christmas Eve and used them for the Christmas presents again—and so on, world without end, amen."

"Who was the old woman?"

"Uncle Roger," said Wee, impiously. "He simply drips with helpful hints like that. I think he gets them out of old, old magazines. Fifty Christmas gifts for one dollar! He showed me that, once. You take an old barrel, and saw off the top in a charming curve, and put in a nice little seat covered with old carpet or something—and you've made just the prettiest easy-chair for grandpa."

"Are you quite respectful to your uncle, Wee?"

"I've groveled to him for twenty-three years,"

said Wee. "He's bossed me every minute. But when he drew that abominable deed just to hurt Jerry's feelings — well, Aunt Carrie, it absolutely finished him with me. Please — please tell me what to do with this horrible mess of clothes!"

Without waiting for an answer, she ran out on the landing, calling, "Norah! Norah!" at the top of her voice.

The old woman came shuffling flat-footedly up the stairs. She looked horrified by the devastation in Wee's beautifully kept room.

"Norah, darling," began Wee. "All these clothes in this room are for you. Yes, everything! All these bully, woolly bellybands for Belgians — yes, Norah, darling, you take these lovely warm shirts with long arms, and drawers with long legs, and you'll never have rheumatism again — never! And see, Norah, you'll skip like a leprechaun in these health shoes with flat, common-sense heels; and you'll look like a banshee in these nainsook nighties, Norah, but don't tell your young man I said so!"

While she poured out these words, she was tying up a great bundle of clothes in the top cotton sheet from her bed. She tossed it on the floor, where it collapsed slowly like a deflating balloon.

"And all these dresses are for you, Norah," she went on, never looking at the stupefied old servant. "Here are my frocks, and here are my cloaks, and

here's the pink dress I wore at the Nuttages' ball —no, Norah, you can't have that one, for it's enchanted, and if you had it you might go and get married yourself. But you can have this—and this—and this!"

On hands and knees Wee excavated in her cedar chest, like a most energetic terrier digging for an unusually alluring woodchuck. Clothes of all kinds came flying out on the floor, and soon another large bundle was made. On top of the clothes, before tying the corners of the sheet over it, Wee flung her pyralin hairbrushes, and the varnished Japanese trays from her dressing table. Norah came out of her dazed rigidity, and began automatically to put things to rights. Wee stopped her by draping coral beads over her hands and forearms.

"Jewelry, Norah!" she said. "Brooches and lockets and strings of beads, and a brass slave bangle. Never be a slave, Norah! I've been one myself, and I know! Ah, Norah, *don't* refuse. Take these things for yourself, or take them for those little nieces out in Dorchester, and tell them to dress up for Halloween. Everything in this room is for you —yes, even the old pink dress. It's a good-luck dress, Norah. Have n't you a little niece who needs some good luck, Norah, my dear?"

Then, turning to her aunt, Wee put both hands on the old lady's shoulders.

"What do you think of that?" she asked.

"I think," said Aunt Caroline, softly, "that you have performed a symbolic gesture, Wee."

"I've saved the best of it for the last," Wee said.

On top of the tallest cupboard stood a china pig, with a slit in its side for pennies. Wee looked at it vindictively.

"That's the emblem of my childhood," she said.

"That's the real symbol of my life, so far."

The top of the cupboard was seven feet from the floor. Wee jumped, caught it with one hand, and dragged down the pig with the other. Then she ran to a window, threw it open and whistled piercingly to two little boys on the opposite sidewalk.

"Scramble!" she called at the top of her voice, and dashed the pig down with all her strength into the street. It burst with a soul-satisfying crash of crockery and small coins.

"And that's that!" said Wee. "Now I'm going shopping—but not in my horrid old car. It's ditched somewhere in Newton, anyway. Come downstairs, and I'll order a better one. I suppose there's some place in Boston that rents cars."

"I suppose so."

"Well," said Wee, "I'll just get something with a chauffeur for to-day, and get a few things. I'm going over to New York to-morrow, and stay with Mary Pickens, and get some good clothes."

"But, Wee!"

"What?"

"Can you — can you afford all this?"

"You bet I can!"

"I know you have always saved regularly out of your allowance," said Mrs. Legg. "But is it wise to give away every stitch you own, and to rent an expensive car, and everything, just when you will need every cent?"

"Caroline DeWolfe Legg," said Wee, reprovingly, "do you know who you are talking to?"

"I know very well."

"You don't know as much as you think you do," said Wee. "I've got a million dollars, and what do you think of that?"

She kissed her aunt wildly on the forehead, and told her the amazing news. "And I've ordered the house at Marblehead opened for the wedding," she concluded. "I'm going to get some nice things. You don't know me at all. Look at these stockings. I ran out to order the invitations this morning, and the stockings looked so nice that I put them right on in the shop. I suppose you'd call that a symbolic gesture. Here's another."

Out of her desk she took a package of old check books, each neatly labeled with its year and fastened with a rubber band. These she flung in her Franklin stove, and covered them with receipted bills, and sheaves of bank statements and canceled checks, and her household budget book, and all the little pocket

account books she had kept in childhood for Uncle Roger's inspection. Drenching these things with kerosene from the Cape Cod lighter, she looked around for matches.

Aunt Carrie leaped with unexpected energy from her chair, and caught Wee's arm.

"You may have gone crazy," she said, "but you shan't burn the house down. Wee, did your uncle *give* you this million dollars?"

"In a manner of speaking, he did. It must have been rather a terrible scene. I was n't there, myself, and neither was Jerry. I gave Jerry half of the money for an engagement present, so he can be independent. I could n't bear to have him come yowling and mewling to me for money, like other men with rich wives. But he would n't, of course—he'll make money from now on. He's going into business in New York."

"Into what business?"

"Oh, banking or something," said Wee, vaguely. "He has had several offers in Wall Street. Or he might go into advertising—I believe the firm is called Dunn & Rustum, or something like that. A man ought to keep occupied, you know. Oh, I *do* feel so much better now!"

Clutching the matchbox which she had withheld from Wee, Aunt Caroline walked slowly downstairs. She knew that she had witnessed one of those psychic explosions which used to be called brain storms.

Wee had burned her bridges. No tatters or bobtails of her old docility were left. She had saved magnificently. Now, if her conversation with the Charles Street Garage over the telephone meant anything, she intended to spend more magnificently still. Her spirit was bubbling over, like a bottle of warm champagne.

"Send me the best-looking car you have," she was saying. "No, a Stanley Steamer or a Haynes-Apperson won't do. Have n't you got some kind of car that is still being made? And if you'll go out and find my old car in Newton, I'll give it to you. What's that? No, I don't want you to pay me twelve dollars—I said I'd *give* it to you. Hurry up with a car now; I can't stand here talking all day."

A limousine arrived, with a grinning boy at the wheel. He wore a soiled linen duster and no hat. Wee bundled her aunt into the car, and told the boy to drive to Browning King's. There, against his sheepish protests, she bought him a chauffeur's cap, and a bottle-green whipcord uniform.

"Put on the coat—never mind changing your breeches now," she said. "Now, Aunt Carrie, we'll see if I can get something to wear."

The saleswomen in the almost deserted shops told Wee, with languid interest, that they had little call for Paris frocks, but that their reproductions were just as good, and wore longer. "See the silk thread

we use in the seams," said one, a motherly soul from New York, exiled in her old age to the Boston branch of her store.

"Who's going to look in the seams?" said Wee. "What I want is a good-looking dress—something that every girl in Boston is n't wearing already."

"What you want," said the woman, sinking her voice to a wary whisper, "is Chanel, Molyneux, and Patou."

"I could make a start with them," agreed Wee. "But I've got to get something to wear when I see them. That black chiffon with the full skirt will have to do."

She picked out three hats, some French underclothes and handkerchiefs, and a dozen pairs of stockings.

"Gee!" mused the exiled saleswoman. "It makes me feel young again, and back in New York. Wonder if any of Wee's girl friends have gone cuckoo, too!" And then, reverting to the chaster accents required by the store, she wearily told the next customer that no adjustment could be made after a rayon blouse had been worn.

"And now," said Wee to Aunt Caroline, "we'll dash over to lunch at the Ritz."

X

"I WILT"

JERRY spent the night before his wedding at Sam Greenaway's house at Nahant. After the long-drawn-out conviviality of his ushers' dinner, he was glad to dine quietly with George Hamill and his host. Mrs. Greenaway was away from home. The three men made themselves comfortable and Sam brought out a bottle of old Madeira to sip after the meal.

It was foggy, of course, with spurts of rain. The ocean heaved and mumbled against rocks as dark gray as the fog. There was not much talk, and after it had died Jerry had letters to write—last-minute notes to all sorts of people, a few bills to pay, and some changes of his permanent address for his bank and for the Glim.

Only a dead man has a permanent address. Jerry did n't know what to give. Wee had told him they would stay at a New York hotel. The line, "Please change my permanent address from 75 Revere Street, Boston, to the Archduke Hotel, New York City," looked so fantastic that he tore these letters to bits.

He had a kit bag, and a suitcase, too. He wished he knew where he, and his baggage, were going. But Wee had been firm about that. "Leave the wedding trip to me," she had said. "You've got a manager now."

George Hamill sat with him while he packed his things: suits, sweaters, tattered old clothes in case of hiking or fishing, dry-cleaned white flannel trousers in case of lunch parties, sneakers, shirts, — a dozen new shirts, — new underclothes, pajamas, half a pound of tobacco, a camera, an empty flask, handkerchiefs, socks. He saved only his wedding clothes for the morrow and the suit of Lovat tweed.

"Your bags will be sent to-morrow morning to Newburyport by express," George said. "That is all you need to know. Wee and I are managing this outing and our staff work is perfect. Don't look so down in the mouth. I wonder if we'll get a good day."

Jerry fiddled and fussed about, locking his bags and then opening them again to find his toothbrush and pajamas for the night. How complicated it all seemed! Where were his bags going? To Newport or Newburyport? He asked George, and George patiently gave him the answer. But why was it necessary to have all this staff work? Why could n't he and Wee go quietly to a justice of the peace somewhere, and be married decently and in private?

"Good night," said George. "Sleep tight. You will have an interesting day to-morrow."

Jerry stretched himself out in bed, snapped out the light, and lay wide-eyed for an hour that seemed like a year. It was like one of those four dreadful nights before the boat races at New London. He felt alert and uneasy and drawn. Well, there was no head coach prowling around Sam Greenaway's house to see that the lights were out and the men peacefully sleeping. Peacefully sleeping! Jerry smiled grimly at the thought; four times had he writhed and twisted through those New London nights only to see the windows at Red Top grow gray in the dawn.

He got suddenly up and went down to the library to get a book. There seemed to be nothing but old, inherited volumes, and those were mainly of a theological cast. Baxter's "Saints' Rest." Do saints rest well on the nights before their martyrdom? Complete works of Sir Walter Scott. Jerry had always meant to sink his teeth into Scott some time. But was there time now to master "Peveril of the Peak" or "The Bride of Lammermoor"? No! At last he picked two bulky, calf-bound volumes and went back to bed.

He opened Fox's "Book of Martyrs," an early edition with such gruesome woodcuts that he blinked at them. But they comforted him in a curious way, making him forget his own uneasiness as he looked

at a lady martyr preparing to be boiled. He put the book down at last, feeling that his interest in it was morbid. Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" came next; it opened at a chapter headed, "Cure of Love-Melancholy by Labor, Diet, Physic, Fasting, &c."

Jerry read on.

The first rule to be observed is to avoid all kissing, dalliance, tokens and the like. Guanerius prescribes his patient to go with haircloth next to the skin, to go barefooted and barelegged in cold weather, to whip himself now and then, but above all to fast. By this means those Indian Brahmins kept themselves continent; and if that would not serve, Gordonius would have young men soundly whipped, or to cool their courage, kept in prison and there fed with bread and water. If imprisonment and hunger will not take them down, time must wear it out; if time will not, the last refuge is a halter.

Jerry frowned and turned to the other remedies.

No sweet wine and mutton is to be used, but those opposite meats which are cucumbers, melons, parsley, woodbine and lettuce. Amatus Lucitanus cured a young Jew, that was almost mad for love, with bloodletting and the syrup of hellebore. Guanerius cured a nobleman in Savoy by shaving and boring his head to let out the fumes, by means of which after two years' madness he was delivered.

The bulky calf-bound volume hit the wall at the foot of Jerry's bed with a crash and a flutter of leaves. He closed his eyes, and opened them again, and it was ten in the morning, with a dazzling sun outside. George Hamill was in the room, pulling up the blinds; Eph Smith and Sam Purvis were noisily drawing his bath.

"I'll take a swim," said Jerry, and borrowed one of the Greenaway bathing suits. He ran down across the lawn to the rocks, followed by Sam's two little girls. They had seen him dive for pennies, imitating the black boys in the West Indies; they brought pennies now, and bade him dive. The water was icy cold. But he plunged and plunged obediently, thinking what a strange sport it was for a bridegroom on his wedding morn. At last the pennies were all lost.

"Do it some more! Do it some more!" screamed the little girls.

"I can't," said Jerry. "I've got to go and get married now."

Coffee and hot kidney stew comforted him. He put on his wedding clothes and sat down to wait while George and the others dressed.

"Oh, Jerry!" It was Eph Smith's voice. "See if you can fasten my waistcoat, will you? The buckle is gone."

Jerry fumbled with the straps for some time before he could knot them. Ridiculous for a

bridegroom to be valeting his ushers! But Eph was always late on all occasions. He wanted a buttonhook for his white spats.

"Better get a wiggle on," said Sam Greenaway. "You can't leave Wee Legg waiting at the church."

"Found a little note; this is what he wrote," chanted Sam Purvis. He was dressing with Eph, and they went out together and were gone for a long time.

Jerry sat down at the writing table. He remembered another letter to write. He took up Sam's fountain pen, not noticing that the little girls had cracked it by using it as a screwdriver. The pen made a large pool of ink on the desk top, and he soaked his sleeve and shirt cuff in it. Time to start!

"I've got the ring right here," said George Hamill, patting his fob pocket.

They got into Sam Greenaway's car, a sturdy old Thomas Flier, with Sam's handy man at the wheel. "To Marblehead," Sam directed, and the man grinned. Jerry and Sam sat on the back seat, and Sam beguiled the trip with little comments on the stock market and the traffic signals. Eph and Sam Purvis were strangely silent. Only George remembered to remark several times that Jerry's bags would be waiting at the express office in Newburyport.

They were nearly at Marblehead when Jerry,

pulling down his cuff, saw that it was stained dark blue with fountain-pen ink.

"You can't be married that way," George said, severely. "Look. It's all over your wrist and hand, too."

"Ocky-poo!" said Eph. "And you cursed *me* for not being ready. Yes, you cursed me with your eye."

"Shut up, Eph," said George. "This is serious. We can't deliver a bridegroom who has been having an ink fight with Sam's little girls, or something. Have we time to go back for a clean shirt?"

"We have not," said Sam Greenaway. "We're late now."

"Then we will buy one here," said George. "Perfect staff work, as usual. Go to a store, driver."

The car stopped at an ancient department store with an ancient man in charge. He shuffled forward with maddening deliberation.

"What we want," said Eph, "is something old and something new, something borrowed and something blue."

It was George Hamill who found the shirt counter, and there were no dress shirts on it. He fumbled with the others, which seemed to be mostly pink, with green spots.

"Don't pick over the whole stock," Sam Purvis advised. "We've only got about ten minutes now."

"Size 15 seems to be the biggest in stock," said

George, "and our bull-necked friend wears size 17. Never mind — we can cut the neckband in the back. Better put it on in the church, Jerry. No dressing room here."

Somebody paid the old man, who made change so slowly that the delay was nerve-racking. Jerry had a fearful vision of himself putting on the shirt in the centre of the church in sight of the whole congregation. But he found himself steered by strong arms around the church to a side door, the vestry door. A long stream of automobiles was blocked on the road in front. He saw bystanders staring at him and seemed to hear voices say: —

"That's him!"

"There he goes!"

"That's the guy that's going to get married!"

It was a relief to dodge out of sight into the brightly varnished vestry room. The organ was squealing and throbbing softly — vamping till ready, no doubt. The clergyman stood in his trousers and undershirt, taking billowy white garments out of his surplice case. Jerry wondered how clergymen always get their wash done so nicely. Perhaps devout old ladies do it for them.

"Better hurry a little if you have any dressing to do," said the clergyman to Jerry, who was slowly taking off his coat, collar, waistcoat, and shirt.

Jerry threw the spoiled shirt on the floor and then picked it up and fumbled with the sleeve links.

George Hamill ripped open the paper parcel with his thumb and took out the new shirt. Jerry thrust his big arms into it and pulled it down hard over his head. It ripped with a screeching noise. The collar would not button. Nobody could find a knife. The clergyman hoisted up his surplice with both hands, producing an odd effect as he groped in his pocket for a penknife. George Hamill took it and slit the neckband in the back so that the buttonholes would meet. The collar button dropped to the floor and disappeared. Both Jerry and George bent down for it, saying, "Hell! — I mean, excuse me!" to the clergyman, under whose robed person it had hidden itself. They bumped their heads together and the button slipped like a bit of wet soap from George's fingers.

But he retrieved it at last and Jerry stood up and tied his necktie before the clergyman's mirror. George helped him on with his coat. Everything was ready at last. He moistened his handkerchief and gently patted a spot of dirt on his right spat. He was feeling amazingly cool and self-possessed. He smiled at the clergyman and said:—

"Only one thing is troubling me. Do I say 'I will' or 'I do'?"

The clergyman smiled. "No one will hear what you say."

Jerry felt eager to dispute the point. He meant to answer very clearly, in loud, self-confident tones.

He looked at George Hamill, who seemed to be fumbling in one pocket after another. "The ring's in your fob pocket," he said. "Wonder if we've time for a cigarette."

Before George could answer, the organ wailed to a full stop, and then burst out, poundingly, into a tune that froze Jerry's blood.

Ooomp — oomp — a — oomp!
Ooomp — oomp — a — oomp!

Jerry's knees turned to water. He clutched George's arm.

"Thar she blows," George said. "Come on, now. Fight!"

Somehow, as if he were deeply under ether, Jerry felt himself swimming out across a great, wide floor, and confronting a million staring eyes. A huge mass of powerful flowers were piled at his left, and a great gold cross stood among them. The clergyman was there, with his face set like stone. Jerry looked at him for a time, and then glanced sidelong down the aisle. A procession was coming up it in a strange, jerky way, very slowly, like slow-motion movies. Ushers — lots of ushers with big white feet. Then bridesmaids, blue and bouffant. Then Wee, very slowly, on Uncle Roger's arm.

That was all Jerry could see for some time. He seemed to slip away deeper under the ether, but he

knew that Wee was beside him. He felt her fingers on his sleeve, and wished that he had strength enough to put his own hand on top of them. His eyesight seemed to have gone almost blank, and it was a long time before he felt himself coming up, up out of the ether, with his eyes focused on the clergyman's boots. The boots had queer patches on both sides. Probably standing on cold stone floors of churches is bad for clergymen's feet. Jerry put the thought away. It was a wrong kind of thought to have when you are being married.

"Jeroboam, wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife . . ."

Suddenly he heard himself say, in a loud, bleating, falsetto voice, "I wilt!"

Wee giggled, and then gave her own response so clearly and so demurely that he felt ashamed of his panic. All of a sudden, the clergyman dropped his official manner. His face relaxed. Human wrinkles came out around his mouth, and he tried to kiss Wee. She stepped deftly back, and shook his hand. A great buzz of whispering filled the church, and then the organ gave a terrific blast of Mendelssohn.

Time to walk out. Jerry gave his arm to Wee, and squared his shoulders so hard that he heard the shirt rip again. But everything was over now. Moving down the aisle was like the last, long, triumphant mile at New London, with the yacht whistles raving, and Yale falling farther and farther

behind. No, it was even better than that. It was better than anything on earth. He recognized the faces of his friends, and bowed and smiled at them. Then came a breath of fresh air. There was a great car at the church door, and he followed Wee into it, and felt his blood bounding through his veins again. Only the reception now, and he and Wee would be free.

"You have n't said," Wee complained, "how you like this car."

"Kayo," he answered. "Hired for the occasion, is n't it?"

"Hired!" said Wee. "It's a Valkyrie—a special body on a Mercedes chassis. They are made for Maharajahs, mostly. I thought it would make a very nice present for you. There are only fourteen of them in the world, and they're all named after the Valkyries. This one's name is Hrist."

Jerry looked out at the bonnet, made of overlapping silver scales. Great wings took the place of a radiator cap.

"It is a—a wonderful present," he said. "I can't believe that you've bought it, Wee."

"After the reception," Wee promised, "I'll show you how it can go."

The Valkyrie was real enough; but, in the three hours that followed, the same strange sense of unreality came over Jerry. He stood beside Wee for a long, long time, receiving congratulations from

a horde of people whose names fused and blended in his ears.

Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Greenpea; Cousin Lizzie Wigglebody; Mr. Stephen Cabstall and his daughter Hope; the Humphrey Coolfellows and their son Diggory; Mr. and Mrs. Augustus Knowbody; Mr. Gilbert Saltsedge; Mrs. Mark Honeykid; Cousin Lizzie Simpwick; Mr. and Mrs. Gorham Frothingbull—faster and faster they came, like people in a broken and spliced motion picture, with flashes of flickering brightness between the breaks.

There was breakfast. A big table for the wedding party, a long buffet with Chiffinch and his men in royal purple livery, and corks popping, and men swarming around the lobster and the ham. There was a big cake to be cut, and Jerry sawed at it feebly. A great deal of time went by before he saw someone looking wistfully at him through a window, and it was his father.

He went out and walked with his father for a moment on the lawn, arm in arm. Then he came back, and more guests revolved around him with congratulatory fatuities. It was like the six-day bicycle race, a circling phantasmagoria with no end.

He looked out on the lawn, and saw numerous Cousin Lizzies darting hither and thither, shaking their black ostrich tips. He wished someone would tell the ushers to stop playing leapfrog with the bridesmaids. He saw Uncle Roger declining cham-

pagne and asking Chiffinch to bring him a small glass of water. He saw Caleb Spinney declining water, and unexpectedly calling for more champagne. He heard Sam Greenaway whispering somewhere, "Let's get out of this and go swimming while the tide's high."

He saw Wee's face, bright with a rapture he had never seen in it before, except in the Concord lane. "Better get dressed to go away now," she breathed. "Jerry, don't you think I give a pretty fine party? Well, you'll see what a much finer one I can give from now on. I love you, Jerry. Go on and change your clothes."

He went upstairs and dressed. Only Eph Smith was with him. Jerry found his Lovat tweeds in the closet. There were no hairbrushes. He combed his hair gingerly with Aunt Carrie's comb. Then he went to the stairs and fought his way slowly down. The hall was packed. He felt the cool, swishing patter of rice across his face. Pull yourself together, boy. Fight! A hand like a sea gull's foot. "Good-bye, sir. Good-bye, Father. Good-bye, George; thanks ever so much for all you did for me. Good-bye."

Then a great car, twisting its way at breakneck speed down the narrow little driveway between the rocks. Then a long, heavenly hush with half-closed eyes, while the car surged forward along a wide road with endless hills, up and down, like a roller coaster

—the Newburyport turnpike. The sun hung bright on the left. All over! Alone at last!

"You give a wonderful wedding, Wee," he said.

"You hated it, Jerry, did n't you?"

"Of course not. I—I have n't had a drink all day, but I feel as if I were coming out of a terrible jag. Where are we going now?"

"Don't worry about that," said Wee. "I'm managing you now."

"I adore being managed by you," he said. His spirit was unfolding like a palm frond in the sun. He grinned, and patted her hand, and sat up with a deep laugh.

"Now," he said, "come the things Uncle Roger warned me about — the painful adjustments of married life."

"Don't worry," said Wee. "This is n't osteopathy; it's only matrimony. We'll be in Newburyport soon, and then we'll go on the water."

"Are we going on the water?"

"Of course," said Wee. "Caleb helped me to select a boat last week."

"It's funny," said Jerry, "how Caleb makes a third in all our best moments. He was with us at Concord, I remember. Do you suppose he'll come along to New York?"

"Jealousy," said Wee, "is the finest compliment in the world."

"Putting that down as to-day's most helpful

thought," said Jerry, "tell me more about this boat. Is it the Bangor boat?"

"Oh, *that*!" Wee made a face. "No, it is n't that. It's something you'll like much better. I saw about one thing, myself. The boat has plenty of headroom. When I think how you bumped your poor head on those awful stairs at Newtonhurst —"

He put his arm behind her.

"Like a weaver's beam," she said.

"What is?"

"Goliath's spear, and your arm," said Wee. "Look at all these sweet bungalows we're passing now, Jerry. See their witty names. Kamp Kiddi-koop. Dew-drop Inn. They would be even nicer than an English-type home —"

"Go on talking," said Jerry. "I'll bet some people have a grand time in these little shacks."

"You have low tastes," said Wee. "You are really longing for that Portuguese cattle steamer, are n't you? Well, I'm going to show you that there are better things in the world."

At the express office in Newburyport the chauffeur stepped down and reappeared with Jerry's bags, afterward handing them to a Swedish sailor on the wharf. Alongside lay a brightly shining mahogany express cruiser, about fifty feet long.

"That's our home," Wee said. "Let's get aboard and start."

Jerry stared open-mouthed at the boat. "Are n't

I supposed to carry my bride over the doorstep?" he said at last.

"There is n't any," said Wee, springing down like a cat to the cruiser's deck before the captain, a brown and puckered Deer Islander, could offer any help. She called up to the chauffeur.

"Go to Camden, Maine, and wait for us, Kidney." The man touched his hat and walked back to the car.

"You see how easily everything arranges itself," said Wee.

"I do," Jerry answered. "And this is only your first wedding trip, is n't it?"

"Come along," Wee said. "What's the matter? If you don't want to jump down, the captain will get you a ladder."

Jerry vaulted down, one hand on the wharf. "Did you say this was—ours?" he asked. "Have you chartered it, or something?"

"Bought it," said Wee. "At Marblehead, for a song. The owner had reverses in Wall Street. But it's brand-new. He never commuted in it at all. It's a hydroplane. You'll be surprised how it can go."

Jerry stood in silent wonder on the after deck while the Swedish sailor cast off the lines. Wee turned to the Deer Islander at the wheel.

"Islesboro, Captain," she said.

The captain let in the clutch. Instantly the

boat's bow rose, like a horse at a hurdle. A broad, foaming wake appeared at the stern, and a great wave chased the boat as it flung itself out of the harbor. Jerry snatched off his hat, and enjoyed the coolness of the wind in his hair. The sky was light blue, and the water so dark blue that he wondered where it got all its color. A flock of gulls wheeled over them, trying with earnest, methodical flaps of their wings to keep pace with the cruiser. But the boat soon outran the gulls, and began to race through long, gentle swells outside the harbor.

Jerry and Wee stood silently on the deck, marveling at the beauty of sea and sky. And then: "This is a little better than the office and your Revere Street room, is n't it, Jerry? I hated to change your plans, but I do think you'll like this better than walking barefoot around the world. Come in and look at the cabin. You might take off those hobnailed boots if you feel like it."

"They are n't hobnailed."

"Well, they're scratching the deck. Oh, my dear — what do I care if you scratch it to ribbons?"

Jerry went into the cabin without bumping his head; the unlucky previous owner must have been a tall man, too. There was a surprisingly large cabin, painted white and green, with brass lamps polished until they shone like gold. There was a large sleeping cabin with bright red blankets on the bed. There was a galley, with a sliding door; open-

ing it, Wee showed Jerry a man in a white coat fussing with pots and pans on the cookstove.

"Name this boat," Wee demanded.

"In champagne only," Jerry said. "If you're going as far as Canada we can see about that."

"There's just one pint of champagne on board—in my hatbox," said Wee. "It's in case you need it, and I won't have it broken over the bow. But we must have a name."

"How about 'C'?"

Wee smiled. "We'll call it that if you insist," she said, "but somehow it sounds rather strange."

"I know that," said Jerry. "It's strange in the last degree. As your husband, I think I'm entitled to know what your first name is."

"Bother my name," said Wee. "As my husband, I'd like to tell you that you're absolutely wonderful. I can't ever thank you enough for getting this boat for us."

"Thank me!"

"Well, you did get it. You're so clever, Jerry. You're the best husband in the world."

At her second repetition of this word, Jerry grew serious. Wee had every reason to use it; the whole world had reason to use it. But it had always suggested restraint to Jerry; it stood for limitations, for repressions and self-denials. He had always thought of a husband as a little, stoop-shouldered man with a straggling moustache and baggy clothes,

coming home on a suburban train with a paper bag full of grapefruit or garden seeds, and a lawn mower in burlaps over his shoulder. His poor, patient, stooping shoulder!

Jerry was a husband now. He had joined the drab brotherhood of men who have lost their freedom. But what had he lost? He stood on the deck of the flying, leaping boat that tossed the long sea miles over her taffrail—a mile every two minutes or less. He went to the rail and breathed deeply, licking the pleasant saltiness off his lips. The shore was dim and misty on their left; on the other side stretched the open sea. Ahead, purple in the evening light, were the mountains of Maine.

For the first time in all his life Jerry felt free. The feeling deepened as he took his wife into his arms.

XI

THE ARCHDUKE HOTEL

JERRY lay sprawling in the bottom of a small dinghy, tanned to the delicate brown of old pine. On this glorious sunny afternoon, after a picnic with Wee, he wore nothing but a pair of old rowing trunks. Wee's costume was a wisp of crêpe; in this solitude, this glowing heat, she needed nothing more.

"I don't tan as you blond Nordics do," she said regretfully. "I just get niggery. But it does n't matter, Jerry. To-morrow we start for New York."

He sighed, and sculled the dinghy a little farther out from the small desert island on which they had spent most of the day. He looked back regretfully at it. The stiff, dark hemlock trees, growing as close together as the bristles in a toothbrush, made it more private, more mysterious, than any isle in the South Seas.

Only the passing of an excursion steamer from Rockport made him push a coat to Wee. When the excursionists had passed by, she wriggled out from under it, and they lay silently for a long time on an ocean as blue and shiny as an aquamarine.

"This North Atlantic Ocean would be just right for a canoe," Jerry said. "No — a dinghy is better. A canoe has all those crosspieces that get in your way."

"That," said Wee, sleepily, "is why they call them thwarts."

"Why must we go back to-morrow? I don't want this honeymoon to end."

"It is n't going to end. We're going to stop taking all-day sun baths, and do some other interesting things. We'll motor to New York to-morrow."

But Kidney reported, next morning, that the Valkyrie had stubbed her low-hung vitals on a thank-you-marm in Maine, and could n't be repaired for days.

"I hate the railroad," said Wee, "and all the common-looking people and screaming babies you meet on it. We will cruise back to Boston, but I think we shall have to take the railroad from there. It would take much too long to go to New York on this poky old boat."

Jerry blinked.

The C had not been old or poky three weeks before, and it was far from decrepit now. He wondered if each of Wee's enthusiasms would last for only three weeks. She had yawned, that last afternoon in the dinghy. She yawned now, as the C slashed the water between Islesboro and Boston. But on the following morning she was all smiles.

"You know that very nice man, Mr. Rich, in the

Back Bay station," she said. "Well, he tells me that by buying twenty-five tickets we can have a whole Pullman car to ourselves. I wish we had a private car, Jerry. It would be so nice for long trips to Florida and—and the Grand Canyon."

"Meanwhile, we'll have to rough it in the way you propose."

"Ah, don't be sarcastic."

"I'm not. But I really think—"

He paused, wondering if all husbands have an irresistible desire to criticize their wives. A wife is the thief of her husband's pocketbook. How fantastically and fatalistically she charges things at stores, trusting that her spouse's bank balance will somehow rise to the occasion by the first of the coming month.

Wee was not doing that. Her money was her own, of course. But how much of it she was spending—spending for such incredible things as the Valkyrie convertible saloon, and twenty-five seats in a Pullman car! She was like a child in a toy store, screaming, "I want! I want! I want!"

He put the thought aside. If she wanted some of the luxuries she had never known, who had a better right? Then he looked at her, and saw in her eyes that she wanted all these things for him.

"You darling," he said. "I will have a little surprise for you on our car. No doubt you have eaten many meals in a diner, so called?"

"Not many," admitted Wee. "Uncle Roger

used to advise a basket lunch, as more sanitary and cheaper. But once in a while I have been in dining cars."

"Lobster salad made of red rubber, dressed with sewing-machine oil. Bread encrusted with big black dirt, like caviare. But don't worry. I will surprise you at lunch time to-morrow."

Wee expected a box of sandwiches, and perhaps a bottle of bootleg claret. But the surprise turned out to be Chiffinch, Jr., in a neat black traveling suit, with purple livery waistcoat. There was a serving man from the Glim Club, too; and a special refrigerator had been sent aboard the car.

The lobster was not rubber, and the wine was Château Lafitte. On the hideous yellow wood table provided by the abashed porter was laid one of the thick damask cloths of the Glim. The glasses were from the club, too, and the silver; and Chiffinch stood behind Jerry's chair, and the serving man behind Wee.

All this made such an unusual railway luncheon for two people that they lingered pleasantly over it till the train crossed the Thames River at New London. As always, crossing the bridge, Jerry looked down at the muddy stream and remembered the four springs he had passed there, and the gasping ecstasies of his four races against Yale.

Then he looked at Wee, who was finishing a bit of Cheddar cheese.

"What I like about this way of traveling," he said, expansively, "is that no one can disturb us. It is wonderful to think that nobody can bother us here."

"Poor darling. I think this is a very stuffy car, and upholstered in the most abominable taste. But if you like it, I'm glad. At least it's nicer to be lunching here than to be dodging around the city, trying to peddle bonds."

"You're a most unmoral young woman—but I venture to say you're right."

Chiffinch took advantage of the stop at the station to fill two liqueur glasses very carefully with Chartreuse.

"I'm glad you're not being bothered, Jerry," said Wee, as the train started again. "I'm glad the dreary old bond business is out of your life for good."

A man came forward at this moment—a young man in a beautifully pressed blue flannel suit, with a new yellow necktie.

"I hope I'm not intruding," he began, in softly modulated tones. "My name is Gerard Hosmer, you know. I met you in New London after the race, five years ago."

"Glad to see you," Jerry said. "Styward, a glass for Mr. Hosmer. Mr. Hosmer, this is my wife."

Wee looked up uncertainly. "Were you a crew man too?"

"No—I was n't on the crew. I am Amherst, you know. We have no chance to row at Amherst; but I came to the race with some people on a yacht, and met your husband at the Griswold Hotel. And so—" he raised his glass and drank a few drops to Wee—"I took this opportunity to come in and offer you my best wishes, you know."

Wee smiled. There was no doubt that she felt attracted by this courteous young man.

He produced, apparently by some feat of prestidigitation, a copy of the New York Times. He put it down on the table over the fragments of crackers and cheese, and began to tap one of its financial advertisements with a seemingly casual finger.

"My office," he said, "had information that you were coming on this train, you know."

"Your office?"

A leaping suspicion stabbed Jerry's mind.

"Dangerfield & Company," said Mr. Hosmer. "Remembering that you and I had met, I thought I would come and offer you our services in New York. And so I waited for you at New London. Perhaps you noticed the morning Times?"

"No," said Wee, brightly. "I thought that as it was our last morning in Boston, forever, we would be true to the Boston Herald for the last time."

"Then you missed our announcement of a new issue, which—" began Mr. Hosmer, glancing down at the paper, and then looking courteously up at

Wee again. "No doubt you have completed your banking arrangements in New York, but you surely know the advantage of an outside specialist in bonds—a house that studies the investment field at all times, you know."

"Are *you* a bond salesman?" asked Jerry, in clear, piercing tones.

"I prefer to be called an investment counselor," answered Mr. Hosmer, in his agreeable voice. "The great strength of our company is that we have no other business except bonds. To young people in your position, bonds are the most attractive investment. They require no watching, they are fully secured, and they can be instantly—or almost instantly—converted into cash. Since they do not fluctuate greatly in price, they—"

"They are the ideal investment for the widowed and the fatherless," broke in Jerry, speaking very fast. "They are the bulwark of our industrial prosperity. They keep the wheels of our railroads turning and bring the mighty power of the waterfalls to our very homes."

Mr. Hosmer looked shocked.

"You say just what I have always felt," he went on, after coughing courteously behind his hand. "And now, since we are so well agreed, you know, I shall take this opportunity to run over three new issues which our house has analyzed and can warmly recommend. They are—"

Still talking, he produced a great sheaf of large papers and circulars and began to spread them out on top of the newspaper.

"One moment," interrupted Jerry. "I want to know where all those circulars came from."

"Please!" said Wee. "It was one of the best tricks I ever saw."

Mr. Hosmer looked vexed by these remarks.

"The rapidly advancing importance of Peru in world affairs—" he began, but Wee stopped him with a finger on his sleeve.

"Won't you show us the trick again?" she begged.

"My tailor," replied Mr. Hosmer, "has been instructed to convert the entire coat lining into one large pocket—thus."

He opened his jacket, and revealed this masterpiece of his tailor's art. It was a special bond salesman's mode. No brief case to carry, no damning tool of the trade in sight to scare away customers, but all the ammunition neatly hidden, and ready to be drawn out as fast as an old-time Western bad man could draw his gun.

Jerry's jaw dropped, and he listened dully to the next ten minutes of Mr. Hosmer's lecture, wondering whether the Pullman conductor had authority to put this trespasser out of the car, or whether Chif-finch and the serving man could take him out and drop him off the back platform.

"I am sorry, Mr. Hosmer," he said at last. "But

I used to be a bond salesman myself, and I absolutely will *not* buy any of your bonds.”

“But I will!” exclaimed Wee. “I’ll take ten — no, twenty — of those San Luis Rey Gold Mining bonds of Peru.”

At her first word Mr. Hosmer whipped out of his hip pocket a black, gold-edged notebook containing his customers’ names. He wrote down Wee’s name with lightning rapidity, and her address at the Archduke Hotel, Park Avenue. Even while he scribbled, his agreeable voice flowed on, urging her tactfully not to overlook the other new issues; but the scowl on Jerry’s face warned him not to press too far.

With the look of a man who has triumphed, he reached under the newspaper for his unfinished glass of Chartreuse, drank it courteously to Jerry and Wee’s happiness, asked them to tell all later bond salesmen that her account was exclusively in the hands of Dangerfield & Company, and then disappeared from the car like a ghost.

“Where’s he gone?” asked Wee. “He looked so happy that I thought he was going to sing ‘Lord Geoffrey Amherst Was a Soldier of the King.’”

“He’s humming it in a washroom, probably,” muttered Jerry. “I’ll find him.”

“No!” said Wee.

“Why not?”

“Because it’s the very first time I ever bought a bond without a long, long talk with Uncle Roger.

He always urged me to save half my allowance, you know, and invest it—and in dull, dull things like Liberty Bonds. Federal Farm Loan Mortgage Bonds are safer still, did you know? Oh, Jerry, I'm so sick of safety. I want to buy some common stocks."

"Not in this market."

"But I'm going to buy some stock," said Wee. "Some of those stocks with funny fancy names, like Katy or Mex Pete. That's the kind that go up."

"And down."

"I don't care. It's my money, and I'm going to have some fun with it at last."

Jerry looked at her flushed face, and he looked around the empty car—the car that had been so idyllic until Mr. Hosmer came.

"I'll bet we'll be met at 125th Street by every realtor and insurance agent and bootlegger in town."

"Won't that be divine?" said Wee.

Jerry went forward and gave low-voiced instructions to Chiffinch. The styward's son had been fed since childhood on Glim Club food—the best cuts of meat, and the most expensive fruits and green vegetables. He showed the virtues of this excellent diet; he was a large, muscular young man. He grinned at Jerry. Perhaps the craven porter, already corrupted by Mr. Hosmer, could again be corrupted by the flock of vultures that would sweep down on the car. But this hereditary Glim official could not.

At New Haven, Jerry got off and bought all the

newspapers. He saw Mr. Hosmer, at a great distance, trotting toward the telegraph office, and knew that this vulture was about to wire his New York office the glad news. The newspapers were revealing, as Jerry skimmed through them in the car. There was only a chaste little item on the society page of the Boston Herald, saying that Mr. and Mrs. Jeroboam McCoy, having returned from their wedding journey, would leave soon for an indefinite sojourn in New York. But the Boston Post and American and Advertiser were far more enterprising. Each had dug up somewhere a picture of Wee in her débutante gown, and of Jerry on the Harvard boathouse float, stripped to his rowing trunks and carrying his oar. The headlines fairly screamed: —

BACK BAY SOCIETY GIRL WILL STEP OUT ON WHITE WAY

“Sick and Tired of Humdrum
Life in Hub!” Cries Wee
Legg, Heiress, Leaving
Boston for Bright
Lights of Broadway

HIRES SPECIAL TRAIN

Jerry read no more. He crumpled the papers, and told the serving man to throw them away.

"Did you see any reporters yesterday?" he asked Wee, as casually as he could.

"No," she said. "One or two papers called up, and I told them we were going to New York — and why. That was all right, was n't it, Jerry?"

"I was only half serious about the bootleggers and insurance men at 125th Street," he said. "But now I think we'll probably have to buy an electric refrigerator, a residence organ, and Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf of Books before we can fight our way off this car, and out of Grand Central Station."

"Well, we need all those things, don't we?" said Wee. "It's quite interesting to read some of the letters that have come in since we went on our honeymoon. Here's a very interesting one I saved for you."

She took it from her bag, and read it aloud: —

THE BILLY GORDON (FORMERLY BILLY
RABINOWITZ) ORCHESTRAS

MY DEAR MRS. MCCOY: —

Surely you will be interested in having some new and different music for your entertainments this social season.

Just a few words about this band. Billy Gordon is a drummer. He has been featured in the pictures; no doubt you saw him throwing his sticks around in such popular movies as "Half Past Six O'Clock" and many others.

Billy Gordon now plays only for society functions, and understands thoroughly just the type of music and also the tempo required in this class of work, be it a classical waltz, a dreamy lyric, or a real warm fox-trot. His men are the pick of New York's Sweet and Hot players, so you may have an easy mind as to their ability. They are cautioned to behave as gentlemen at all times.

Thanking you in advance for the favor of your consideration, and assuring you that a telephone call will always reach me personally during the morning, I remain,

Cordially yours,

BILLY GORDON

"New York is simply reaching out to us," Jerry said. "Its big, warm heart is beating like—like Billy Gordon beating the drum. Don't read me any more, Wee. I don't think I can bear it, so soon after lunch."

"There's a wonderful letter about Circling the Globe," said Wee, smiling a little. "It seems that we can belong to a traveling club of cultivated congenials, who prefer to travel on a big steamer larger and safer than the most luxurious yacht, although just as luxurious, if not more so. Two days out from New York, the club is greeted by warm, balmy weather which lasts all the way around from Gibraltar's storied rock to the legend-haunted bazars of Singapore. The rates begin at \$2250, and —"

Jerry dropped his huge hand over the steamship folder. Wee tried to pull it out for some time, and

then gave up. She sat quietly until the train had passed 125th Street. If there was a reception committee of New Yorkers with articles and services to sell, Jerry's guards at both ends of the car were too much for them. The train pulled slowly into the terminal.

"Shall I brush you off, sah?"

It was the porter's voice, and it was cross. For the first time in his languid existence, the porter had been a minor personage on his own car. Now he came sulkily forward and pawed at Jerry with his gnarled black claws.

"In the words of the old joke," Jerry said, "you need n't brush me off—I'll get off in the regular way. Here are twenty-five tips for you. I thank you. Good-bye."

He led Wee hastily up the ramp, dodged to the left, came out of the wrong gateway, and hurried her into a taxi on the Lexington Avenue side.

"I wish," she said, "that we could drive up Fifth Avenue, and not up this reproduction of Shawmut Avenue at home."

"At home!" exclaimed Jerry. "You're at home right here, darling—you're a New Yorker now."

"Well, then, why can't we use New York's best street? Were you really afraid of the salesmen, Jerry—the counselors, I mean?"

"Considering what you fell for, on the train—" began Jerry, and bit his lip.

Was he going to become an old spoilsport? Was Wee going to feel that she had only swapped one Uncle Roger for another one? On this day of days in her life, was he going to join the great army of mollycoddles who are threatening the American spirit with their harsh croakings of "Safety First!" A grand motto. A Miss Nancy motto! What would it have done to George Washington, to Robert E. Lee, if it had been drummed into *them*?

As the taxi jounced and squeaked its way up Lexington Avenue, Jerry thought of the fear-haunted slogans that have spread like a fog over our newspapers, our billboards, our magazines. He looked out of the cab window, and saw the great gray buildings in which advertising experts write these great gray warnings for the public. Perils of malnutrition, perils of overeating; perils of eating soft foods, perils of pink toothbrush; dangers of washing the sensitive complexion with soap and water, dangers of sluggish digestion.

"Life is perilous," he said softly to Wee. "Thank God you're a Puritan!"

"I'm not."

"But you are! You're one of that hard and tough band of adventurers who confused religion with wanderlust, and who sailed the little, leaky Mayflower across three thousand miles of uncharted seas! I admire those pious pirates, Wee, and I'm glad you're one of them in spirit. When I think of

that rough-and-ready old desperado, Myles Standish, sitting on the quarter-deck sharpening his dagger on the sole of his boot —”

“Ah, do forget Myles Standish’s boots,” broke in Wee. “We’re turning into Park Avenue at last, and here’s the Archduke Hotel.”

A doorman in glittering uniform met them under the gayly striped portico.

“Home is where the heart is,” said Jerry, softly. “Let me carry you over the doorstep of our old Manhattan home.”

“Don’t be silly. This is just a temporary place, until we can look around for something good.”

The foyer was floored with marble, not rubber, and the tapestry substitute on the walls was so magnificent that Jerry blinked. He skidded across the floor to the desk, registered with a shaking hand, and followed a bell boy until the golden elevator gate clashed behind him, and he rose with soft alacrity to the twenty-ninth floor.

It was only a small suite that Wee had reserved by telegram—hall, sitting room, bedroom, and bath. But even the smallest of these rooms seemed more spacious than Jerry’s sitting room and bed alcove in Boston. Roominess was enhanced by the use of *art moderne*—not too much of it, but just enough for the sophisticated traveling public. The stripes in the wallpaper ran round and round the room, not up and down. The fireplace was very

small, and set three feet above the floor. The enormous bed, covered with leopard-cloth fabric, was without such obsolete encumbrances as headboard or footboard. But the decorator had shown restraint. The bed was not built into the wall, and there were no small benches attached to it on which visitors might sit.

The bathroom, too, was severely plain. Black onyx was not used. The tiles were white and green, and the large, built-in tub was a darker green. The gold-plated faucets were frankly placed on one end of it, in plain sight.

There were a large, hand-hammered cocktail shaker and a dozen silver cups on the zebra-wood table beside the door; and American Beauty roses lent a conservative note to a wall bracket above them. Jerry's inspection of this interesting apartment had not ended before Wee slipped out of her clothes, and turned on the water in the great green tub.

As the door closed behind her, Jerry sat down in an easy-chair without a back, and looked out of the window at the incandescent spire of the Ritz Tower, across a canyon of soft, velvety darkness studded with electric lights.

He sat for a long time, thinking how often at this time of day he had sat in his window on grimy little Revere Street, in Boston, staring at the tenement houses across the way.

Wee writhed upward in the bathtub, extended a slim leg to its fullest stretch, and kicked open the door.

"This place," she said, judicially, "is far, far different from No. 42, Newtonhurst Terrace Gardens, East Newton, Mass."

XII

WHAT ABOUT ADVERTISING?

"WE'VE got a penthouse at last!" cried Wee, sitting up excitedly in bed and waving the telephone receiver around her head.

"At last!" murmured Jerry McCoy.

They had been in New York a fortnight. What a fortnight! As he sat in the low, hard seat of the Archduke's easy-chair, finishing the morning paper, his mind was a jumble of dinners, taxicab drives, apartments, night clubs, country houses, and shops — but principally shops. Fifth Avenue had taken Wee to its glittering heart. Already she was a connoisseur of Fifth Avenue; with her married friends, and alone, she had eagerly explored every corner of every store. Jerry had gone on some of these expeditions, as a porter rather than an adviser; there were times when Wee could not wait to have her purchases sent home.

Home to the Archduke Hotel! No — it was not home, and never could be. It was simply a temporary stopping place, as Wee had said, until she could look around and find something good. She had looked hard. Accompanied by a footsore but

suave young man from the real estate office of Lockerby & Gore, she had darted like a shuttle in a loom across the East Sixties, Seventies, Eighties, and Nineties, doing apartments as fast and thoroughly as she did the shops. Toward Sutton Place, with the spider web of bridge cables hanging behind it, she turned never a glance. Greenwich Village had no charms for her. She wanted, as she told the suave young man, to be in the centre of things. And after she had seen a score of apartment houses, and had been through a dozen remodeled dwellings, — old, bulbous, warty brownstone houses once, but now slicked up with new Georgian and French and Italian façades, — she set her mind on a penthouse.

Somehow, Jerry was even less help in house hunting than he was in the shops. The memory of that pitiful afternoon in Newtonhurst was still with her. She had thought it would be a relief to Jerry to see large and restful homes — homes so new that the painters and plasterers were still denned up in them, making languid protests when moved aside. But he was as awkward, as uncomfortable as ever. After a single afternoon with him, she sent him to the Harvard Club to play squash.

"You would really rather that I chose, would n't you?" she said.

"Of course," said Jerry, meekly. "Anything you like will be O. K. with me."

"You are my favorite husband," Wee said, and

dismissed him; there was just time to inspect a new penthouse uptown. The suave young man's feet were hurting a good deal, but he hobbled gamely after her. Wee had made up her mind that it is quicker to walk half a dozen blocks any day in New York than to try to drive them. The Valkyrie, now repaired, pursued her patiently from red light to red light.

She remembered Jerry's remark about any house she might choose being O. K. with him; and when she heard from Lockerby & Gore, a few mornings later, that the penthouse she had seen was available on payment of a couple of thousand dollars to the lady who had an option on it, she felt she had really made a coup that would delight him.

"Look out for that telephone," Jerry said. "Don't tear it off the wire—we may need it again."

"Always so careful and prudent. You're a Boston man still."

"I'm not a Boston man, and never was. Can't you ever get Boston off your mind?"

"Yes, my love, I can. When I stand in the middle of our bathroom I can see myself reflected sixteen times in the mirrors on the walls. That's what New York does for you. It shows that you have at least sixteen new personalities, most of which are a surprise and delight to you. But that is n't what I was going to tell you."

"You were going to tell me about a penthouse. I thought a penthouse was one of those little sheds on the top of an elevator shaft."

"It was. But it's different now. It's a country house on the roof of a tall building. I've been to see several of them, and I think I've got the very best small penthouse in New York. It's just like being on a mountain in Switzerland, or somewhere. You will be crazy about it, Jerry. You can see the ships in the harbor, and the Palisades, and the people and automobiles scurrying around like tiny beetles in the streets—but instead of being on a chilly, snow-capped mountain, you're in a very well planned little country house, with imitation grass and vines and trees and everything."

"Imitation?"

"Unluckily," said Wee, "it seems that real plants don't grow very well on top of the skyscrapers, so they have some very good-looking green stuff they put down, and it looks just like grass, especially in the evening, and of course they make wonderful artificial trees, and grapevines full of glass grapes, and so forth. Our penthouse is a very small one—I persuaded Lockerby & Gore that we could get along nicely with six rooms."

"I got along nicely in one room with a bed alcove, and we've been getting along great with just a couple of rooms here."

"What do you mean, 'great'?"

"Well, I think this hotel is fine," Jerry said. "Although expensive, it certainly clicks. No matter what you think of, Room Service sends it right up. I like the elaborate, if slightly cool, food."

"It has one merit," admitted Wee. "It is n't home cooking, and it is n't advertised as such. I shall never forget what poor dear old Norah could do to a steak!"

"A feast for the gods?"

"An old bit of rubber heel," smiled Wee. "Well, there's no use thinking about it. What are you doing this morning? I'd take you to see the penthouse, but I want you to wait till it's fixed up."

"Unfurnished, is it?"

"Oh, absolutely. There's a whole herd of painters ruminating upstairs, and *such* a cross old male plumber — a magnificent specimen in his way, but apparently without a mate. He is prowling around in the kitchen, between naps, and I'm almost afraid he'd bite if you bothered him. Then there are two paperhangers, lying on those funny joggling-boards they put up. They are not hibernating, Jerry; I distinctly saw both of them move. So you see it will be some time, yet, before I can get a decorator and go to work."

"Are decorators equally sluggish?"

"Where have you been all these years?" asked

Wee. "Decorators snap at a job, as a trout snaps at a fly. Several have snapped already, but I've been firm. I'm going to Lily Damfreville, and she's the best in New York."

Jerry stood up.

"Where are you going, darling?"

"To try to keep the home fires burning in this penthouse," said Jerry, determinedly. "I'm going to get a job."

"Oh, my dear!"

"What's the matter? Do you *mind* my having a job?"

"Certainly not. Every man ought to have an occupation of some kind. But I'm so afraid of what happens to a man who works in a bank. He gets as dry as one of his own bonds."

"That may be true, among the bankers you know," Jerry admitted. "But New York bankers don't get dry. They are full of good food and the best drinks, and they look it. They have a summer tan, and an autumn tan, and a spring tan—and as for their winter tan, it is the finest of all. They are always taking splendid long vacations abroad. And when they have conventions, or any other business meetings with each other, they are careful to have them at Los Angeles, or some other place that means a long, refreshing journey there and back."

"Is that so?"

"Well, I think it's so."

"It can't be true when you're a beginner," Wee said. "If you start with the Federal Union Trust Company this week, I can't believe that they'll insist on your taking a trip to Algiers next January for the sake of a sunburn. No, Jerry. If you start with them now, you'll be selling bonds again, and just as hard as before. I know you!"

"You *do* mind my working, don't you?"

Jerry paused sulkily after this question, his hand on the door. For a moment Wee was silent, too. Perhaps she was hurting Jerry's ambitions. Perhaps he was on his way downtown, not to ask for a job at anything as new and gaudy as the Federal Union Trust, but to see about that vague, unforgettable hint he had long ago received from the lordliest old bank of them all. That house employed no bond salesmen, Wee knew. It doled out its bonds to lesser banks, as a king scatters largesse. Was it still in Jerry's mind? What does a young man do there before he becomes a Partner—a Partner with the biggest P of all?

"Jerry!" she called.

"Speaking."

"Must you be a banker *to-day*?"

"I'm not going to be a banker at all," he said.

"Oh, my dear, I'm so relieved. You see, we're

going to Meadowbrook to see the polo this afternoon. But if you're not going to be a banker, what are you thinking about?"

He turned, and came back to her, looming enormous at the foot of the bed.

"I want to try something in which I have no pull at all."

"Are you considering the diplomatic service?"

"Yes, I'm considering it. If you'd just persuade Mr. Hoover to appoint me Ambassador to some nice country like England, or Italy, or —"

"Why not?"

"Why not, indeed?" asked Jerry, patiently. "If that's impossible, I'm afraid there is a long period of training, and some examinations to pass, and quite a lot of time might go by before we got as high as Liberia, or Ecuador."

"I wish," said Wee, "that you would n't get a job at anything to-day. There's no pleasing you, really, as I've said before. First you want to get along with no pull at all, and then you want Mr. Hoover persuaded to send you to London. You're in too much of a hurry, I think. You see, so many men are obliged to work at things they hate — while you have a chance to do some one thing you feel you have a call to do."

Jerry grinned. "That sounds as if you suspected me of a secret longing to enter the Harvard Theological School."

"I'd adore you as a minister, Jerry. You would preach beautifully in your husky, confidential whisper—and you have such a charming bedside manner, too. All your parishioners would *want* to be ill."

"This conversation is getting nowhere," said Jerry. "Charming as my bedside manner may be, I'm going out now to investigate the advertising business. That's what my friend Freddy Wilson is in. You remember him, don't you? He wrote such excellent poems for the Harvard magazines, and was thought to be the coming young man in literature—so now, of course, quite naturally, he's in the biggest and best advertising agency. Dunn & Rustum, Incorporated, is the name of it."

He strolled out, whistling, and stopping only long enough to call back that he would meet Wee at the Colony Restaurant for lunch.

He waited for some time in the ornate reception room of the advertising agency, a room decorated in the Spanish style. Canary birds, in wrought-iron cages, chirped and fluttered against a background of ivy leaves of painted tin. A charming young woman took his name; he wondered why, with that face and hair, she was in business instead of musical comedy. Her smiles flashed round the large room, and when Jerry's eyes became accustomed to the half light he saw that it was full of men, sitting on benches along the walls.

Some of them were reading old magazines; others sat with their chins on their chests. All were well dressed. All had keen but gloomy faces. Now and then one of them would rise and speak earnestly to the young woman.

"I am so *sor-ree*, but Mr. Dunn is still in conference," she would coo; or, "Yes, Mr. Rustum knows you are here and will see you as so-*oon* as he can!" Her voice was soothing, almost hypnotic; but, from time to time, one of the men would look at his watch, swear softly, and walk to the elevator. Meanwhile, still other men would join the patient hosts on the benches.

When Freddy Wilson came out, hand outstretched, Jerry took the first opportunity to ask about these men.

"Are they bond salesmen, by any chance?"

"No, no," said Freddy. "They are representatives. They are space salesmen—they represent the various magazines and newspapers."

"I wish you to know," Jerry said, modestly, "that I have n't the slightest knowledge of advertising. I don't think, however, that I should like to be a representative. Is there any branch of advertising work that gives a man more action?"

"Gosh!"

This far from literary expression was torn from Freddy Wilson by the depth of his surprise. "You want action, do you?" he gasped. "You want to

see men working like coal heavers, like stokers—you want to see the agony of creative effort at its sharpest, its most painful? All right, then, come with me."

Jerry strode after him down a corridor one full city block long. Its rough stucco walls were washed with creamy yellow, and pierced at intervals with oval-topped iron grilles. Through the grilles could be seen various executives, sitting at Spanish refectory tables, and dictating memorandums to young girls of dazzling blondness and beauty.

Here and there a wall fountain or well-chosen bit of statuary broke the long line of the corridor wall. Freddy Wilson opened his own grille, and preceded Jerry into an office furnished in Jacobean oak. There were green glass bull's-eyes in the heavily leaded windows, and such a thick and soft velvet rug that it tickled Jerry's ankles above his shoes.

"This is too magnificent for words," he said.

"Silence—silence and good taste are the watchwords," explained Freddy. "Mr. Rustum often says that we have nothing to sell here but brains. We can put no shiny automobiles or tasteful bathroom fixtures on our floor to show customers. We can't even entertain them with a stock-quotation board. So we can merely decorate our offices in a way that suggests that our brains are working in congenial surroundings. As you see."

"As I see."

Jerry blinked at the room. "You must be a vice president at least," he said.

"Bunk," said Freddy Wilson. "I'm a Junior Account Executive—that's all. I contact with the La Belle France Company, and write copy for two or three more."

"In an agony of creative effort?"

"You bet," Freddy said. "If you had to get any copy past Mr. Kitzis of the La Belle France Company, you'd say it was no mean feat to write it."

"Freddy!"

"Well?"

"When you wrote that sonnet you published in the Atlantic Monthly in your senior year you did n't talk like this."

"Comparatively," said Freddy Wilson, "that sonnet was a cinch. This is the hardest sort of writing, Jerry. You see, it's got to pull."

"Pull what?"

"Coupons. Coupons from the readers. Mr. Kitzis counts up all the coupons, and so he has an extremely accurate check on my literary skill. Here's one of his products—a new mouth wash. I've got to name it before I can advertise it. Any ideas?"

"Goodbreatho," said Jerry, promptly.

"Too long. Not original enough," said Freddy

Wilson. "I've been getting suggestions all around the office, and I'm still stuck. Look at this list."

He handed a sheet of paper to Jerry, who read these words:—

Nixo	Cuto	Gloff
Lovo	Smilo	Quox
Sweeto	Brito	Kopet
Sweetie	No-Breff	Clo-Clo
Charmo	Kil-Jerm	Do-Do
Clincho	Etoile	Jou-Jou
Kayo	Eclair	Brunx
Shusho	Amour	Shoo
Pasho	Amourette	Smacko

"*All* those names for one mouth wash!" said Jerry, in surprise. "You have taken all that trouble and you still are n't satisfied?"

"Satisfied!" Freddy Wilson gave a bitter, even a Byronic laugh. "Those are merely the best out of more than a hundred; and not one of them's good enough. We'll work and work until we get something perfect—something that clicks—something that will burn its way into every woman's brain. The effort, the pains, the terrific battle we go through every day! How can I suggest it to you? Do you know there's a printer waiting to run off 200,000 labels—and another waiting to print more than half a million folders to mail to Social Register and Blue Book lists of wealthy women everywhere

—and not a wheel can turn till I get the right name, and persuade Mr. Kitzis to O. K. it?”

“Has n’t he thought of a name?”

“Jerry, you’re crazy. What’s an advertising man for, if not to know the sort of names that intrigue the public? I’ll sell him Kil-Jerm, I suppose, though he’ll doubt if it’s French enough. Well, let’s forget it, and walk around the shop. You want to work here, don’t you?”

“I don’t know. You’ve sort of scared me.”

“Come on and see a presentation then. There’s one going on now, in our Hush-Hush Room.”

“Your what?”

“Our quiet room for ratiocination—for constructive thought, you know. Its formal name is the Silent Room, but nobody calls it that. It was used as a sort of retreat for earnest thinkers, but some of them thought so earnestly they fell asleep and snored; so now we use it as a theatre, a lecture hall, or what you will. Come with me, and see a presentation.”

“Is somebody getting a mark of the firm’s esteem? A gold-filled watch for twenty-five years of loyal service, or the like?”

“Nothing like that,” Freddy said. “No watches of any sort are given away here, and we have n’t any veterans of twenty-five years. If a man lasts twenty-five weeks he’s an old-timer. What we are going to hear is a lecture, with movies. A

magazine representative is going to present the virtues of his magazine."

"But I thought the representatives were safely parked in the reception room."

"Sometimes," said Freddy, "a Columbus among them gets inside. Follow me."

Jerry found himself in a large, unventilated room in the middle of the offices. Along the walls were tremendous leather-covered easy-chairs, each with a smoking stand and dull bronze Tudor spittoon. A large cast of "Le Penseur," by Rodin, furnished stimulus to thought, and water dripped melodiously into a marble fountain full of goldfish and cigarette butts. The Silent Room was kept very dark as a further aid to meditation, but now there was a silver screen at the end of it, on which movies were flickering. By their light Jerry could see ten or twelve rows of gold chairs, full of junior account executives who were required to attend the lecture.

The speaker was a short, plump, very bald man. His voice was loud. He had a pointer in his hand.

"We are in Brittany," he was saying. "If among you there are any close students of Breton girls—heh, heh!—you will recognize the picturesque native caps."

Four sturdy young washerwomen came rollicking down toward the camera. All of them smiled, and the one on the right winked and put out her tongue.

Instantly the scene changed to a street with tall

buildings, and signs reading "Real Estate" and "Eats."

"We are now in the United States," said the lecturer, unnecessarily. "We are in Akron, Ohio—but we might just as well be in Bangor, Maine. Here come some charming American girls."

Four young women came mincing down the street. When they caught sight of the camera they smiled broadly, and the one on the right winked, and seemed about to put out her tongue. Then the scene changed to a precisely similar street, which the lecturer explained was more than two thousand miles away.

"Seattle, Washington," he said, "though it might as well be Salisbury, North Carolina. See! Our photographer—our camera man, I should say, heh, heh!—has again been lucky enough to shoot four sweet little maids from school."

"If the blonde on the right winks and puts out her tongue," whispered Freddy Wilson, "I'll admit this is a marvelous trick."

"But what does it prove?"

"Listen."

"We have now seen," said the lecturer, "that the women of Europe are primitive, individual types. Each little country has its own style of dress, its own foods, its own small peculiarities. But there is only *one* woman in America—a standardized woman with no individuality, no personal idiosyn-

crasies of any kind. Shall we follow this woman as she goes shopping?"

A plump, middle-aged housewife was now seen entering the door of a department store.

"This picture was taken in Pawtucket, Rhode Island," said the speaker, "but it might as well have been Wichita Falls, Texas. See. The housewife is now buying an Arto-Noovo refrigerator, baby-grand style—one of the products so ably advertised by your company, heh, heh! See, she has made a first payment of fifteen dollars; she agrees with you that it is convenient to purchase on a Postponed Payment Plan. Now she is choosing some Duchess of Devonshire celanese panties at one dollar; and if you will follow her to the grocery department, you will see her buy another of the articles you advertise—a carton of Peppo-Jiffo breakfast food. And while she buys these products, in Pawtucket, gentlemen, thirty million other standardized housewives are buying the same trade-marked and nationally advertised articles in every other city in the land. And what has brought about this blessing, gentlemen, this guarantee of our national prosperity?"

"Let's go," said Freddy, suddenly, pulling at Jerry's arm.

"But I wanted to hear the end of that amazing speech," complained Jerry, in the corridor. "I did n't know that all American women are like

that—all buying the same goods at the same minute of each day.”

“Oh, he’s getting to his grand climax,” Freddy groaned. “He’ll ascribe the millennium, first, to the wonderful advertising we prepare here, and second—heh, heh!—to the enormous national influence of Home Arts Magazine, reaching four million housewives with incomes averaging \$2750 a year. He’ll pity France again, and Germany, and Italy, and the other small, benighted countries that have no enormous advertising agencies and all-pervading housewives’ magazines. And he’ll remind his hearers that they wield, through the advertising columns of Home Arts Magazine, the mightiest power ever wielded by man!”

“But is it true?”

“Sure, it’s true. And to-morrow we’ll hear another speech just like it from the representative of Kitchen Hints & Bedroom Beautiful Monthly—reaching four and a half million housewives, with incomes of at least \$3000 a year. They are at us all the time, those magazines for the home. Let’s walk around the office. I’ll show you our testing kitchen, where Peppo-Jiffo can be served in seventeen dainty new ways, by adding sliced bananas and other fruits.”

Jerry saw the kitchen; and then he saw the art department, where rows of draughtsmen were hunched over drawing boards. He saw the directors’

room, and the library, and the two squash-racquets courts with their shower baths, and the long steel racks that held copies of every magazine and newspaper in America. At last he came to the door of the president, Mr. Barnham Dunn.

Mr. Dunn's secretary, a fatigued and slightly perspiring brunette, sat in an anteroom telling somebody over the telephone that Mr. Dunn was just leaving for Akron, and that she would certainly give him the message the minute he returned. Freddy grinned at her, said, "Morning, Susan!" and tapped on the inner door. A voice, also fatigued, grunted, "Come in!"

After so much statuary, so many square yards of wrought-iron and tin ivy and creamy-yellow walls, the office of Mr. Barnham Dunn had an austerity that was refreshing to Jerry's eye. It was precisely like the office of the manager of a steamship company at Rockport, Maine. There was no rug. A large and battered roll-top desk, of early make, stood against the wall, which was painted brown. A hat-tree, of golden oak, held the presidential overcoat, hat, rubbers, and umbrella. The president had removed his coat, and was working in shirt sleeves. Arm garters held them comfortably clear of his wrists.

He was a large, tired-looking person—a sort of weary Titan of a man. His long, thin stogy was unlighted. He chewed it savagely as he pecked

with two forefingers at a battered typewriter of a make as ancient as his desk.

A stack of sixteen or eighteen sheets of paper held his morning's work. He nodded for silence as he finished another sheet, ripped it out of the machine, and then swung his revolving chair around to face Freddy Wilson and Jerry.

"Here's my new advertising plan and three advertisements for Nirvana Burial Abbey," he said, rather genially. "You contact with Nirvana, don't you, Wilson? No? Well, give this to the man who does. This agency is growing so big that I can't keep track of things. There's a baby born to somebody here every week or every day — I forget which. Tell Nirvana that it would be beneath the dignity of the largest Hebrew sepulchral mausoleum to use less than a full page in the newspapers every Sunday. Don't let them cut it down to a half page. Miss Stretton! What's the matter with that girl? Out powdering her nose, I suppose. Miss Stretton, here's copy for Peppo-Jiffo and Electric Hip Reducer and Titanic Tone-Master Radio. I'll get at that new Mother's Kisses Candy account this afternoon. Well, Wilson, what do you want?"

"This is Mr. McCoy. I told you about him. He was captain of the football team at Harvard, and has been working in a bank on State Street, Boston. He thought he would like to know about this great game, and so . . ."

"You brought a Harvard man into *this* office! Take him to the directors' room at once." Mr. Dunn smiled, and pretended to look embarrassed. "This room of mine went Early American a couple of years ago, but I just could n't bear it and had it arranged properly again. How do you like that art calendar, McCoy?"

Jerry had been looking at the monstrous thing: a lithograph of a laughing baby, splashing its milk on the table, sent with the compliments of the Mittineague Steam Cotton Mills of Springfield, Massachusetts.

"This office of yours, Mr. Dunn," he said, "is the first thing I've seen in New York that reminds me of Boston. My former boss, Mr. Spinney, sits in a room exactly like this."

"Caleb Spinney? Well, well! I know him; he saves my money for me. Make money in New York, and let a Boston banker save it for you—that's my advice to young men. So you want to get into the advertising business, do you? Wilson here is so collegiate that he still calls it a game."

The word "collegiate" applied to Freddy Wilson—so recently the leader of Harvard's young intellectuals, the Signet Club president, the Atlantic Monthly contributor—made Jerry McCoy give a loud, strangled laugh.

"It is n't a game," said Barnham Dunn, sadly. "Not when you're the head of an advertising firm,

anyway. But Wilson is a great comfort to us. He can't write, he can't draw, he can't meet important men, but he can take my copy around to the assistant advertising managers and get them to approve it. Rustum runs the business of this agency, and I write the advertisements, and about three hundred Wilsons receive the title Account Executive in lieu of a raise of salary—and so we somehow get by.”

He smiled so charmingly at Freddy Wilson, even during this catalogue of his imperfections, that both visitors smiled too. Then a film seemed to drop over Mr. Dunn's brown eyes; he swung back, mechanically, to his typewriter, and his fingers started pecking away again as Freddy and Jerry left the room.

“Well, that's the longest talk any young fellow has had with *him* in three years,” said Wilson, walking to Mr. Rustum's door. The office into which he led Jerry was so superb, with its Spanish antique furniture and brocade curtains, that Jerry hardly realized that the interview with Mr. Rustum had begun and ended with one sentence.

“You may place your application on file,” snapped Mr. Rustum, and turned back to his three telephones.

Jerry said good-bye to Freddy Wilson in the reception room. He was still dazed. There were two or three seats vacant, now that one o'clock

was near and many of the representatives were going out for lunch, before resuming their vigil.

"Sit down just a second," Freddy said. "I hope you have a clear picture of what we do, and how advertising is prepared. It's hard to show you, in just a few hours. Compared to the plain, sensible lives we led in college, it must seem rather mysterious. In college we had a few hours of easy work in the morning, and plenty of exercise in the afternoons, and in the evenings we got drunk if we liked. Such a life is sane and normal and just what every man needs. But here we have to keep in fighting trim—"

"For the agony of creative effort. I know."

"Well, look at Dunn. He'll write for six or eight hours a day, besides lunching with some prospective client; he'll go to a gym and pass the medicine ball between six and seven this evening, to get up steam for to-morrow; then he'll dine with some other customer, and go home and write for a couple of hours more. That's his day, and Sunday is just like it. He says that when he goes home before his children are in bed, they want to know who's that strange man in the house."

"You've been very kind," said Jerry, rising. "You've made everything very clear indeed, except—Well, I don't quite understand about the testimonials. How do you get people in society, and also the aristocracy abroad, to indorse the La

Belle France products, after you have named them?"

"Few people," said Freddy, "mind either having their pictures in the paper or a little extra money in the bank. And those few, if they exist, always seem to have needy relatives who can easily persuade them. It's an art, of course."

"Could you lunch with Wee and me, and go to Meadowbrook?"

"I'm afraid," said Freddy, "that would not be considered by Mr. Rustum as constructive contact. I must say good-bye. I don't know if you've applied for a job or not—but if you have, let me hear from you."

At lunch, with two new friends,—Mr. Boxy Keck and Miss Alice Thorpley,—Wee asked Jerry if he had learned all about the advertising business.

"All," said Jerry, and spoke the truth.

XIII

TWO COWS ARE COWED

WEE was unable to find Lily Damfreville, the best decorator in New York, that morning. But she met Miss Damfreville in her office next day.

"You're a Boston girl, are n't you?" the great decorator asked. "I have heard about you. But how can I do anything? I am crowded, rushed, suffocated, and driven half mad by a perfectly absurd piece of work. I am doing over a church in the modern style—have you heard about it?"

She nodded her superbly white head to emphasize her words. Her skin was pink and young, and she had beautiful hands. Wee liked her on sight; she had a breeziness, a cordiality, a charm that made her more conspicuous and more important than any of the incomparable objects among which she sat.

"It is most exciting to be taking out the dark old pews, and the terrible oak timbers, and the stained-glass windows," she said. "And the reading desk—it's a big bronze eagle, *too* absurd—and those awful, awful Victorian lighting fixtures. But what am I going to put in their places to make the church smart-looking and attractive, without

shocking its old parishioners more than they're shocked now? It's a problem, I can tell you. I don't think I can be *too* modern, do you?"

"I did n't know you could be modern at all—in a church," gasped Wee.

"Then you have n't been at Vitry-sur-Seine," said Miss Damfreville. "There's a very pretty modern church there, all made of concrete and glass. Well, I don't want to bore you with my troubles. Tell me about yours. What kind of a house have you got?"

"A penthouse. Quite a small one, but I want it to be attractive, and I think —"

"Oh, quite! Express your personality, of course. Boston decorations. A grandfather's clock, Empire sofas and chairs, steel engravings, dark carpets, a purple pane of glass in each window, and—yes, I have it—a framed letter from Oliver Wendell Emerson on the wall. And a Mayflower cradle. I saw a very interesting one lately on Madison Avenue. My daughter Pat can really do everything for you better than I can. Yes, Pat will do everything."

"But," said Wee, "I *don't* want to express my Boston personality. Far from it! Anything but that! I don't want any Copley portraits on the walls, or Landseer engravings, either. I came to New York to get away from them. I want some-

thing very simple. The effect of underfurnishing, perhaps. My husband has some Irish ancestors, far back, and I thought it might be amusing to have the Irish Georgian style. Do you think that would be as practical as the French Provincial?"

"I know what you've been doing!" Miss Damfreville's voice was severe. "You've been reading the interior-decorating magazines."

"Yes," said Wee, proudly. "I have."

"Throw them all in the furnace to-day — don't even leave them around where they can seduce the ashman. Nobody cares about styles and periods any more."

An assistant came from the back of Miss Damfreville's floor, bringing a tray with two rusks and a cup of bouillon.

"Lunch," said Lily. "All I have time for. If you knew how this telephone rings and rings — and especially at lunch time, when people are sure they can catch me. If I lunch at home, it's still worse. Do you know, it's interesting to find a Bostonian who does n't want to express Boston wherever she goes. I hope you're in New York on a most tremendous spree —"

Wee nodded.

"I saw something in the newspaper about you," Lily Damfreville said. "And Caleb Spinney was speaking about you, only a few weeks ago."

"Does Caleb Spinney *buy* things here?"

Wee's tone was so shocked, so incredulous, that Miss Damfreville laughed.

"Oh, dear, no," she explained. "He *sells* things here. He inherited a lovely old house from an aunt, last spring—my dear, it is simply stuffed with absolutely priceless antiques—and the paneling is a dream! But he is very comfortable already, of course, in that nice big house at Nahant—"

"A house built in 1885," said Wee.

"But very snug," said Miss Damfreville. "Solid comfort in every room. And his apartment on Mount Vernon Street is just what he wants, too. So he decided to—"

She waved a hand expressively at the finest Goddard highboy Wee had ever seen; finer, even than the one in Uncle Roger Legg's dining room.

"Just one of his Aunt Zipporah Spinney's things," said Miss Damfreville. "But I must n't bore you. My daughter Pat will be here any minute. Some of the customers amuse themselves by calling her Patina, for short. She's a nice child, and—"

She picked up the French telephone.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Eckwitz, but you know that I said next Thursday. . . . You are giving a party this very evening? Well, it may amuse your guests not to find a dining table. . . . You are sure it will not? Well, I can't do anything about it. . . . No. I will do *nothing*! Good-bye."

She put the telephone down, and smiled wearily at Wee. "I suppose she thought she could make me lend her a dining table," she said. "But she can't. In this business you have to cow your customers, but I can't cow her. She's a cow already—but I'm boring you again. Now I will have to go to that depressing church and persuade the sweet Bishop that pink walls are devout. Is 'devout' the word, or 'pious'? I'm sure you can't pray properly in cold gray surroundings. You have to ask charmingly for things if you expect to get them, don't you? All the girls in my boarding school in Devonshire prayed *so* unattractively, poor darlings. How can you be charming if your nose is blue with cold, and you have n't enough to eat? No wonder their prayers were never answered. Do you believe in pink walls?"

Again, before Wee could recover herself, the telephone rang. "Absolutely no!" she said. "I will not divide one cent." She took the telephone away from her ear, and laid it down on the table while the tiny voice in it raved on.

"That is a gentleman cow," she said calmly, to Wee. "He has appointed himself an unofficial tout for my business, and once in a weak moment I paid him something. He is a large, pink, elderly cow — too old to slaughter, I'm afraid. Oh, if you knew how much I miss Pierre Damfreville, the dear soul! He used to answer the telephone so divinely,

but somebody told him it was beneath his dignity as a prince of France. So I really had to divorce him. He is in New York now; I will ask him to call on you."

She put the telephone back on its stand, after sweetly informing her caller that she had a lawyer too—and a better one.

"I've thought how to do your penthouse," she announced astonishingly. "I can see every room, in my mind. But instead of submitting a plan and estimates—they are such a bore, don't you think?—I think you and Pat should go first and look at every piece. There are about five or six rooms in people's houses that I want you to see, too. All that will take a week or ten days; and then we will go right to work, together. Yes, that will be the best way."

"I agree with you that estimates are a bore," said Wee. "My life has been much too full of estimates in the past. It would be nice to see everything, to go to all the galleries and dealers, and then pick out the things I like without stopping to worry about the prices."

"That is the most remarkable thing I have ever heard a Bostonian say."

"I'm not a Bostonian any more."

"I wonder!" said Lily Damfreville. "However, we'll soon know, won't we? Will you come to dine, so very informally, this evening? Just a few

rather amusing people are coming—you know some of them, I'm sure. Major Steele-Bright, and Boxy Keck, and Fred Harmon, and a few women."

"Yes," said Wee. "I have met Mr. Keck."

"You will like the others just as well," promised Lily Damfreville. "If you will bring your husband, it will be charming."

"Thank you very much."

Wee left with Pat, a tall, blond girl with a stride quite as purposeful as Wee's own. The afternoon resolved itself into a kaleidoscopic tour of the wholesale decorating establishments, and by five o'clock Wee was tired, for the first time since she had come to New York.

"But the air here is so invigorating," she said to Pat, at tea. "In Boston it is different. Even a couple of hours of social settlement work are rather tiring. But this New York atmosphere is so full of interesting smells—everything from gasoline to perfume—that it seems to have as much kick as a cocktail. This is the first time I've felt willing to sit down at all."

"I'm tired all the time," said Pat Damfreville. "But I've got a book full of notes, and I know you're going to have a house you will like. Mother's a genius. Just give her her head!"

"I will," said Wee.

Dinner was a great success. Lily Damfreville's apartment was large, and decorated with a

comfortable effect of overfurnishing. The chairs were numerous and ample, and so were the sofas. The tables were full of small objects; it was impossible to put down one's hand without finding a matchbox, or a cigarette, or some other useful object.

"We are just a mother and daughter living alone," Lily said. "This is just a place to come back and rest when you're worn out—as I am every day. But how nice it is to feel exhausted in the evening; it proves you have really lived all day. That's not an original thought, but what thoughts are? Here's dear Boxy—he'd be furious if we told him his thoughts were not original. Boxy, you know Mr. and Mrs. McCoy. Go and show Tompkins how to make cocktails, Boxy; he's English, like me, and it just is n't in the bulldog breed to make good cocktails. Here's Freddy. Freddy, you are going to sing after dinner. I promised Mrs. McCoy that you would sing your own dear songs, and if you don't I know she will get up and leave. How any woman dares to have people to dine without asking Boxy and Freddy to amuse them is more than I know. Who is that man in the hall? Oh, what luck! It's Pierre! How good of you, my angel, to drop in and take potluck."

The prince kissed Wee's hand and was placed next to her at the foot of the table at dinner. He charmed her with another and very different story of the

necessity for his divorce. It was due, he said, to Lily's invincible preference for English cooking.

"I am delicate," he said. "Scaling the Matterhorn or flying at great heights is difficult for me. My heart becomes agitated. I do not breathe well. Ah, but I breathe still less well—my heart gives me anguish, Mrs. McCoy—when for the fourteenth day I am expected to eat boiled mutton and cabbage, when toad in the hole is placed before me, when—"

He spread out his hands, laughed, and raised his champagne glass gallantly to Lily.

"She is adorable," he said. "There is not another woman like her. To dine very often at her house is a privilege I cannot deny myself. But tell me about Boston, Mrs. McCoy. It has become the same as New York, has it not?"

"I doubt," said Wee, "if any two cities in the world can be more different."

"What are you saying?" called Lily Damfreville, from her end of the table. "Are you telling Pierre a tale of two cities, Mrs. McCoy? But you must n't do that. You must let him talk to you. There is no such talker in the whole world. Except Freddy, of course—and Boxy, too. To think that we have these three all together. Go ahead, all of you. Talk!"

There was no need of this command. Wee could hear bursts of remarkable talk from all around the table.

"Progressive monogamy," someone said, "is the only cure for the dullness of life."

"Dancing," said somebody else, "is musical massage."

"No dealers are above putting reeded edges on old dining tables—it increases the price at least a hundred dollars, probably more."

"There are nine basic Anglo-Saxon monosyllables in the English language which everybody knows, and nobody writes, and the effort is to put all of them into the first act of every new play."

"Beastly jolly!"

This happened to be Major Steele-Bright's remark, and he was sitting on Wee's right. She looked at his gray, seamed face, with the skin so tightly drawn over the temples, and the deep hollows in the cheeks. It was a face like a skull; the face of a soldier, an explorer who had drained life's cup to the lees. His evening clothes, Wee thought, were by far the best in the room; his hands were the most sensitive, and the best kept.

"My name was Wee Legg," she began. "It is Mrs. McCoy, now. I am married to that large, shy young man on Miss Damfreville's left."

"Beastly jolly!" said Major Steele-Bright, and concentrated on his alligator pear.

"I come from Boston," said Wee bravely. "It really is rather confusing to hear so many brilliant things being said—at least, they seem brilliant to

me. It is just like going to the theatre here; I'm not quite sure yet if I understand the plays. It always seems to me that there's a double meaning. Some of the plays are apparently so silly, and so vulgar, too. But when I read the reviews next morning I am amazed to find that all the plays are so brilliant, so important. What do you think of New York life, Major Steele-Bright?"

"Beastly jolly!" said he.

"I suppose that's true," said Wee, doubtfully. "You take life as you find it, I'm sure. Pat Damfreville told me this afternoon that you had such a terrible time at Gallipoli. A dinner like this must seem very trivial to you. But it is absolutely thrilling to me. I've led a very quiet life, you know. I—"

She paused, wondering if he would ever speak. After a time he murmured, "Beastly jolly!" and took a second helping of salad. Lily Damfreville came to the rescue. She swept her guests out of the dining room, saying that nobody wanted dessert, and that coffee would follow them. Boxy Keck sang; each of the others, except Wee, was obliged to do some little recitation or trick. Even Jerry, blushing furiously, tore a pack of cards across with his fingers, put the half packs on top of each other and tore them again. Boxy Keck and Pat Damfreville gave the last scene of a Shakespeare play; they made it up as they went along, and it

ended amid vast applause in their double death from lovesickness on the hearthrug.

"Bridge is such a bore—it makes you concentrate," Lily Damfreville said. "We play games that make you disperse. Anybody can concentrate, but it takes a genius to forget all about himself, and send his personality skyrocketing all around the room. That's what we all need. How hot it is! I wish we could take off our flesh and sit in our bones. Who said that? It does n't matter; it deserves to be said again. What, going already, my dear? And you too, Mr. McCoy? I do hope you will both dine here soon again—Pierre is fascinated with both of you, I can see."

The prince concealed his fascination, and kissed Wee's hand in an almost absent-minded way. But that was not wholly his fault; she was too much interested in what Boxy Keck was saying.

"Dear Mrs. McCoy," said Boxy Keck. "I have a feeling that we shall meet again very soon and become the greatest friends. You are such an acquisition to New York—to our little corner of New York. I am sure you are going to show us many things we don't know; and I cannot tell you how much Lily's description of your penthouse has interested me. I take such an interest in beautiful things, and I can see that you will be the one person in ten thousand who makes no mistakes in choosing them."

It was very flattering. Wee looked at his little pinkish eyes, under their white eyebrows. What had caused this sudden interest? Did Mr. Keck know about Uncle Roger's million dollars? Was he a salesman for something or other? Wee would have liked to ask him. But she decided that the admiration in his little eyes was sincere.

He went down in the elevator with Jerry and Wee, and when they reached the sidewalk she discovered that the Major was there too. Both of them lived in quite the opposite direction from the Archduke Hotel, but it seemed impossible not to offer them a lift home. They accepted without hesitation. When the Valkyrie dropped Wee and Jerry at their door at last, they went to bed with the conviction that they had spent a delightful evening, and made several new and charming friends.

XIV

ONE WHITE CHIP

"WHAT about to-night?" Jerry asked.

"We're going to a very amusing place — it's said to be a real old-fashioned saloon."

"Who are 'we'?"

"Boxy, of course. And Alice Thorpley, and maybe the Major, if he can come."

"He can come, all right. He can *always* come."

Wee had long since stopped feeling disturbed by Jerry's little digs at the new circle of friends who so firmly surrounded the McCoys. Jerry liked to grumble. As soon as a party began, he enjoyed it almost as much as anyone. It was only when he was tying his white tie in front of the mirror, or telephoning down to the valet to ask why his dinner coat had n't been pressed and sent up, that he permitted himself to be cross.

"What does Boxy Keck do?" he asked. "He seems to be devoted to the business of having no business at all."

"Does that matter to you?"

"I have n't a job yet," said Jerry, flushing. "But

I'm looking for one, every day. I don't believe Boxy gets up till three in the afternoon."

"I don't care. I like him. He is always ready to go anywhere, and he has always been there before, and can get the best table. He's always amusing, always pleasant, always thoughtful."

"Everything which I'm not."

"Ah, Jerry, must you be personal? I love you, you know. I wonder why you want to picture yourself to me in such unpleasant ways. Yes, you do. I wish you'd stop fretting about a job, and do something that would really occupy your time and interest you."

"For instance?"

"Paint," said Wee. "You had quite a gift for water colors—you really had. You could go to the Art Students League, and study, and next summer you'd have ever so much pleasure out of it. Why must you think about earning money all the time?"

Jerry said nothing. He had made a very simple financial arrangement with Wee—in fact, she had made it herself. Their two bank accounts were kept separate. When the bills came in, they were divided into two equal piles. Then Jerry paid half, and Wee paid half. It was like a game. They played it for three months. Sometimes Jerry found all the biggest bills in his pile, and sometimes Wee did. Meanwhile the expenses were increasing

so fast that it seemed futile to want to earn sixty or seventy dollars a week.

That was Jerry's value as a bond salesman, and he knew it. Months would go by before he could build up a good list of New York customers. Competition was deadly. Hundreds, thousands of college men just like himself were selling bonds in New York. They belonged to the best clubs, they had the entrée everywhere. And Jerry did n't want to sell bonds. He wanted a desk job of some kind. The bankers he knew had little to offer. Instead of taking him on, they sent him around to each other with vague recommendations. He learned from Freddy Wilson that there were no vacancies at all in Dunn & Rustum.

"What's the matter with me, anyway?" he asked Freddy, one night in the Harvard Club.

"I can answer that question," Freddy said, "if you'll tell me how much money you've got."

"A lot, if you must know. It is n't mine, of course; it's Wee's. But she insisted on giving it to me, and I spend it on her. We do everything together, and divide the bills."

"When you say a lot, just what do you mean?"

Jerry paused.

It was a curious question, but he had never had any secrets from Freddy. Next to George Hamill, Freddy Wilson was the best friend he ever had in the Glim. Freddy was a little eccentric, of course,

or he would n't have written sonnets for the Atlantic Monthly and have gone into the advertising business. He would have gone into a respectable profession, like bond selling. But Freddy was trustworthy. He could keep a secret.

"I've got almost four hundred and eighty thousand dollars," Jerry said.

"One white chip," said Freddy Wilson.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, it's a lot of money in the small towns. You could buy a nice little business with it in Troy or Emporia—an automobile agency, or the control of a small department store. But what is it in New York? One white chip!"

"It is n't," said Jerry. "It's a lot of money anywhere."

"Enough to start a humble little bond business," Freddy admitted. "One of those small firms that suck up to the big houses, and get small participations. Or you could start manufacturing something in a shed in Jersey City, and go broke in two years. You've got just enough to sit in the big game, Jerry, but not enough to bet."

"I have done some betting with it." Jerry was getting angry fast. "I've bought some stocks. This is n't a very good time to invest, however. Everything I've touched has gone down."

"You bet it is n't a good time. Even the office boys know that. I'm sorry to be so frank with

you, Jerry. Have another glass of French Vichy?"

"No, thanks. What I want to do, Freddy, is to leave my money where it is. It's Wee's money, anyway, not mine. She's spending pretty fast, I don't mind telling you. A hundred thousand went out of her half million before we got started, almost. The car was twenty-two thousand, and the cruiser seventeen, and she put twenty-five more into clothes, and jewelry and so forth—and she bought twenty South American bonds for the fun of it—and—"

"Stop right there. Shut up, I tell you. Stop!"

"Why should I?"

"Because the minute a New Yorker starts belly-aching about his wife's extravagances, he's through! You're raving along as if it was your money. It's your wife's, you say. Well, has n't she got a right to spend it if she likes? Those little tuppenny-ha'penny items you mention—they're just chicken feed. Small change! Wait till your wife starts decorating an apartment, or wants to build a home in Palm Beach."

"She has started to decorate an apartment—a penthouse on Eighty-first Street."

"Let her," said Freddy. "It's as good a way of spending a couple of hundred thousand dollars as any. You've got a million to spend between you, less the small items you've already bought. Well, go ahead and spend it!"

"But I don't think we ought to spend the million.

I think we ought to live on the interest of it. No, I think Wee ought to have that, and I ought to make my own way."

Freddy Wilson looked long and earnestly at the ceiling through the bottom of his vichy glass.

"You don't know what you want," he said, at last. "Now don't argue. George Hamill told me all about you, and how, instead of being the brave young rescuer of a damsel in distress, you suddenly found yourself with a ton of money hanging round your neck. You've been frank with me. All right. I'll be frank, too. Here's how I live."

Jerry listened dully, while Freddy Wilson explained. He had \$4000 a year of his own, and \$90 a week from the office; his wife had an allowance of \$2000 from her mother.

"I live," said Freddy, "in a small house on Cow Lane, in Great Neck. Don't laugh. A lot of other young fellows live there, and it's in a really fine bit of woodland—if it was in France, they'd call it a forest. We have tennis and very good bathing a quarter mile from my house on a private beach. We often dress for dinner. We all have cars, and two maids. If we were n't living there, we'd be on some lane in Lawrence, living in houses that used to be occupied by people's coachmen in the old days. I could n't afford to join the Rock-away Hunting Club, though. Golf and tennis there, or at Piping Rock, is far beyond my speed.

You might as well face it, Jerry. Anything less than \$30,000 a year is grinding poverty for a young couple in New York."

"Have you any children?"

"One and a half," Freddy said. "When the second one comes, I'll have to pay for him on the installment plan—and probably give up my Ford."

"But—but—" Jerry was stuttering now, in confusion. "There must be thousands of young people just starting out in New York. I know they can't have very nice little houses, or apartments in good districts in the city—"

"At a thousand dollars a room a year!" put in Freddy.

"But they get by, somehow, don't they?"

"With the wife stewing up supper in a kitchenette," Freddy said. "They don't belong to the Racquet Club, Jerry, or the Knickerbocker, or the Brook. I hear your name is up for all three."

"Yes, of course it is."

"Then spend your million and be done with it. You and Wee can't live on its annual interest—and you can't make enough money yourself to count."

"But when the million is spent, what then?"

"My God!" Freddy was up now, putting on his overcoat and preparing to catch the 11.38 train to Great Neck. "Don't ask me to prophesy, Jerry. All I can tell you is facts."

The memory of that talk with Freddy Wilson lingered in Jerry's mind.

Strange, perverse fancies came to him. He doubted only one thing that Freddy had said. It must surely be possible to live quietly in New York on \$50,000 a year, the interest on one million at 5 per cent. "You can't live on it," Freddy had said. Well, of course, Freddy knew Wee. Freddy knew that Wee did n't do things by halves. Wee was living hard, spending hard, enjoying herself hard. Her psychology was Uncle Roger's own, with a reverse twist. He wanted to save a ten-dollar bill forever; she wanted to throw it away as fast as possible. If she ever heard of Death Valley Scotty lighting a cigarette with a banknote for a spill, she would do the same. Would she? Yes, if she thought it would give pleasure to Jerry — make him feel easy, comfortable, secure.

He scowled at his face in the Archduke's *art moderne* mirror. A coffin-shaped mirror! It fitted his mood.

"Where's the real old-fashioned saloon?" he asked Wee.

"I don't know, but Boxy Keck does."

She took three dancing steps in front of her mirror, smoothed her gown over her hips, and stepped up to him to be kissed. It was her way of ending all tiresome domestic arguments. She knew, inwardly, that Jerry liked routine — a regu-

lar job, a regular orbit around the city, a regular seat on the 8.19 train. She adored the absence of routine in their present life. It was in such delightful contrast with her stodgy old days in Boston.

The saloon proved to be on Fortieth Street. The name on its business card was the Midtown Merchants and Traders Association. But they entered it through the rear entrance of an office building, past the freight elevator. The janitor and a group of his truck-driving friends were passed, and then there was a door with a grille, and a hard-faced watchman behind it, and then a big square room with a painting of Cupid and Psyche, larger than life, over the bar.

"This used to be called the Calcutta Bicycle Club," said Boxy. "But that was before it was fixed up so nicely. The atmosphere is perfect, and we call it Kearney's Mahogany Wine Palace now."

The bar was thirty feet long, and four bartenders stood behind it. They were elderly, bald, rather paternal-looking men, with old-fashioned, sweeping moustaches like the handlebars on a bicycle. Round, dark-topped tables and iron chairs were scattered around the room, but most of the patrons preferred to stand at the bar.

Wee was amused by the regulation touches—the brass rail, the soiled towels hanging from hooks, the pyramids of glasses behind the bar, the Bock Beer signs with their funny goat heads in lithography,

and the rather skimpy free lunch, consisting of nuts, pretzels, and olives in saucers of dirty water.

To Boxy and the Major and Alice Thorpley, all this decoration was an old story. Boxy led the way briskly to the nearest bartender.

"Now what will it be?" The man asked the immemorial question of his craft, wiping the top of the bar with a damp rag.

"Five old-fashioned," said Boxy Keck.

Ready, on a shelf behind the bar, were two or three dozen little tumblers containing dark red whiskey. The bartender added sugar, lemon peel, and bitters, and set five of these bar glasses down before the party with a flourish. Jerry paid the check—five dollars.

"That man used to be at the old Hoffman House," whispered Boxy. "He's a wonder. Try him with any mixed drink at all."

"You mean he can drink anything?" asked Wee.

"I mean he can *mix* anything. Well, his supplies are rather limited now—but I'm sure Jerry would like to try a New Orleans fizz. One New Orleans, Tom."

Tom's eye brightened. He took lemon juice and cream, orange juice, thick syrups, bitters, sugar, and various other seemingly incompatible things, and shook them earnestly together for many minutes—having added liquors of at least three different

sorts before the shaking began. Rhythmically, beautifully, his hands vibrated up and down.

"That is the supreme poetry of motion," said Boxy, as the minutes passed. "No machine in all the world can mix drinks as a first-rate bartender can."

"Give me a taste," said Wee, as the smooth white liquid slid out of the shaker into Jerry's tall glass. "It's wonderful, of course—but I don't like it. I did n't like that red booze, either. It smells rather queer here, too, and I think we've seen it thoroughly. Let's go to Nevada Finn's new club, Boxy. You promised me I'd see her some day."

Jerry paid for the fizz, and for four more old-fashioned cocktails, offering his own to Major Steele-Bright. "Do you mind leaving?" he asked that warrior. "Perhaps the New Club Finn will be amusing."

The New Club Finn was in a narrow but extremely long room, with a small lobby in front, and a raised platform for the orchestra at the other end. Tables were placed so closely together it was difficult to know if you were in your own party, or someone else's—but that, as Boxy Keck said, made things all the more intimate. As they forced their way over people's legs to the table he had reserved by telephone from Kearney's, a man with black patent-leather hair was finishing an exhibition dance with a dark girl.

"Heffle and Ginsky," said Boxy Keck. "They used to work in a Brooklyn department store, and now they are in the 'Scandals' and here. It shows to what heights a young working girl and her boy friend can aspire."

After an interval for general dancing, eight Happiness Girls—also from the "Scandals"—came on the floor, attired in costumes resembling small pink parasols without the handles. Jerry, with Boxy's advice, had ordered supper.

"Pails," said Boxy to the head waiter.

"For five, sir. Yes, sir."

"What does that mean?" asked Wee, when the man had gone. "What are pails?"

"Champagne. Quarts of champagne. Oh, would n't it be nice to see a magnum again!"

"Or a jeroboam," said Jerry, bitterly.

Boxy Keck jumped to his feet. "Fool, fool that I am! In all these weeks and months of our friendship, why did n't I think of that? It's a wonderful thought. Come here, young lady. Tell your boss that I have a billion-dollar thought for her. Present my respectful compliments to Miss Finn, do you understand, and tell her that I hope she will come to my table, and receive a large idea."

The cigarette girl smiled at him, but continued to show her wares to Major Steele-Bright. He chose a tin cigarette holder, painted in blue and gold. Collapsed, it would fit the waistcoat pocket; but

it expanded to two feet or more. Jerry paid four dollars for this, and gave the Major a cigarette to put into it.

"I'm sorry for that girl," Wee said, when the cigarette seller had gone to find Miss Finn. "She looks like an underfed monkey."

"The effect of underfeeding is most fashionable," Alice Thorpley drawled. "Like underfurnishing, you know."

Jerry wished she would not drawl. Why could n't she bite off her words, as true New Yorkers do? Boxy Keck spoke as a machine gun fires. Staccato—that was the word. Alice came from New Orleans, and she was a long way from home—but was that any excuse? Silly to be annoyed because Alice Thorpley drawled! Jerry squared his shoulders. He wished his head would stop buzzing.

My table! That's what Boxy Keck had said, confound him! Who was paying the cover charge at that table? Who was going to pay for everything, from Major Steele-Bright's tin cigarette holder to the scrambled eggs and the pails? Jerry was going to pay for everything. No, he was n't. He hung his head for a moment in shame. The money was n't his. It was Wee's—and Wee was having the time of her life.

A large gentleman from the West, in a dark green Tuxedo coat with velvet collar, was at that moment

pressing his elbow firmly into her back. That could n't be helped; the tables were so close together. The gentleman need n't nestle against her, though. He was quite unconscious of it, Jerry thought. He was talking to his companion, a very young girl in a low-cut red dress and no underclothes. How could you insert any underclothes between such a tight gown and yourself? Perhaps she wore Duchess of Devonshire celanese panties. Oh, forget it! Wee was n't thinking dark thoughts like these, Jerry knew. Wee was laughing gayly, delightedly, into Boxy Keck's ear.

"Here's food," said that authority, suddenly. "Here's food, everybody. Bunch, lunch. Lunch, bunch!"

Wee giggled. Jerry looked down at his plate as a dab of scrambled eggs was placed on it; when he looked up again, he saw the most dazzling blonde head in the world, and a pair of enormous bright blue eyes.

"Nevada," said Boxy, with ceremony, "this is the new boy who has just come to school. Shake hands politely, like a good little girl, with your new play-mate from Boston, Mr. Jerry McCoy."

"Welcome to our city!" said Nevada Finn.

It was a drawl, yes, but it was not the sleepy drawl of New Orleans. It was the low-pitched, metallic voice of the great Southwest. A voice full of provocation, a voice that can say, "Put up your

hands!" or "I love you!" without the slightest change in its metallic timbre.

"I am very pleased to be here," said Jerry McCoy, still dazzled by the glittering hair and eyes of his hostess.

"Nevada," said Boxy Keck, "this is a great day in your business career. Won't you sit down?"

"And have a conference?" asked the lady, archly. "That's what my lawyers say. Don't lawyers make you sick? Some day I'm going to assume a funnel shape and mow a path three miles wide through all the lawyers in New York. What's the billion-dollar idea?"

"Nevada," said Boxy, "what is this?"

"One pail. A bottle of wine. We called it fizz out in Tonopah, when I was a little blue-eyed tottie in my dad's saloon."

"Is this the only kind of bottle you know?"

"Say, what is this, anyway—a cross-examination?"

The lady was still arch, still smiling, but a film was settling over her eyes. In another minute, Jerry thought, she might draw a revolver from her ample bosom—a delicate little lady's model revolver with a pearl handle—and say, "This has gone far enough. Now I'm going to shoot you!"

"I'm doing this to help you, my dear creature," pursued Boxy. "Do you know any other size in wine bottles than this contemptible quart?"

"Pints," said Nevada. "Rotten little pints for tightwads. We don't sell 'em. No!"

Boxy's eyes swept the table in triumph.

"Ever heard of a magnum?" he asked.

"I guess so," replied Nevada. "But it was before my time. Say, Boxy, lover, how old do you think I am?"

"Perpetually and eternally twenty-two. Now listen to me. Pints are for tightwads, quarts are for common persons who don't know any better, and magnums are for rich Americans in Paris. It's a bottle as big as this," said Boxy, holding his hand eighteen inches above the table. "It has class, Nevada. It has tone! It satisfies the kings and queens of night life. But the emperors—ah, the emperors want something bigger and finer still. So the dear French wine growers prepare special bottles this high!"

Boxy's hand was now so far above the table that Nevada laughed.

"Oh, what a fish story!"

"Ask the man who's used one," Boxy said. "It's called jeroboam, and here's the man who gave it the name. Mr. Jeroboam McCoy. Cross my heart and hope to die, Nevada, I'm not stringing you. Ask anyone here who knows."

Nevada frowned, smiled, flashed her dazzling glance around the table, and then walked straight to a party of fat, elderly men across the room. She

came back in a minute, nodding her spun-gold hair.

"It's so," she said. "Gee, what class it would give this club, Boxy—if only the dear American bootleggers could produce big bottles like that!"

"They can. The American industrial spirit is dauntless. It laughs at obstacles. Just see your wine merchants, Nevada. We've given you the tip. Now it's up to you."

She went away, dimpling and smiling from ear to ear. They saw her sitting in earnest, unsmiling conversation with a small, ratty-looking man at a table beside the wall.

"That's her bootie," explained Boxy. "Scar-face Mike Gee, they used to call him. He had a picturesque past, but he's had some excellent plastic surgery, and is now a business man in a large way. He's really the chairman of Nevada's board of directors, as well as her bootie. She's passing our tip to him. Jerry, you'll be famous here. Wait and see."

"It's all perfectly thrilling," Wee cried. She looked at her very thin platinum watch. Past two o'clock, and the evening just beginning; the club was so jammed now that it was impossible to dance, and almost to sit. Only Major Steele-Bright was impassive. He had rested his long holder on the bare shoulder of a young woman who was squeezed against him; and through it he inhaled long and dreamy puffs of smoke. He had said nothing all

evening, except once when a fat lady tripped and fell into his arms. And then all he said was, "Beastly jolly!"

An hour later, Nevada Finn forced her smiling way to Wee's table.

"All arranged," she said. "We'll have some class and tone here, with those big, big bottles of wine. I'll service Mr. Bogan with them, see if I don't."

"Who's Mr. Bogan?" asked Wee.

"He's a pest. He's one of those emperors of night life, and he's here all the time, and spends money without kissing it good-bye—I'll say that for him. But he's a pest. He wants so much service. Sometimes I think he's a Federal Prohibition Agent in disguise."

She jerked a thumb, not very elegantly, toward a gentleman by the wall—a gentleman only less ratty in appearance than Mr. Mike Gee. Mr. Bogan, however, was not alone. He had a lady companion in a low-cut red gown; and there were two pails beside them.

"Well, so long as he spends freely, I can't complain," said the philosophical Miss Finn. "I came here to thank you for the lovely idea. It's a money-maker, but what I like best about it is it's so exclusive and refined. Oh, Mr. McCoy, I think you're lucky. I think you've brought me just the punch this place needs. Watch for my big

jerries — no, I'll call 'em jeroboams. Here's something for you."

She leaned over and kissed him, dazzlingly, on the brow.

"Stick around with me," she said, invitingly, "and I'll write your name on Broadway in letters a mile high."

XV

MAN'S CONQUEST OF THE AIR

"WHAT are we doing to-night?" asked Jerry.

"We're giving," said Wee, "a dinner for Lily Damfreville at the Colony Restaurant."

"Have n't we given her enough already?" growled Jerry. "No," he added quickly, "I did n't mean to say that. Who else is coming?"

"Boxy, of course," said Wee; "and Major Steele-Bright and Alice Thorpley. I am afraid the Jeff Cubitts may not come, but they said they would make a great effort. I love these little dinners. You know, Jerry, every time I see the Major's eyeglass fairly trembling over his soup, it thrills me. Oh, and there is another very nice man, Mr. Marion Wyeth from Palm Beach."

"Who is he?"

"He's an architect."

"An architect?"

"Quite a wonderful architect, too—Boxy tells me that he has planned some very astounding houses down there and I thought it would be very interesting to meet him and get his advice."

"On what?"

"Well," said Wee, "on the penthouse — and some other things. I've got another idea, Jerry."

Two lines formed with startling clearness between Jerry's eyebrows. Wee paused, kissed him, and ran out of the room.

Jerry went on opening the mail. The first publication of their names among the Dilatory Domiciles in the New York book had added so very much to the daily flood of letters that Jerry had to give at least half an hour's scowling attention to them every morning. It was something to do, but he hated looking for an occasional personal letter among the circulars. Wee was amused to find that the Social Register is the guiding star to every exclusive mail-order advertiser and charity or hospital in New York.

To-day Jerry divided the letters into several neat piles, and when Wee came back he announced the morning catch to her in the tones of an angler gloating over his creel. Was there a heavy overtone of irony in his voice? Wee was not quite sure, but she smiled with delight when he informed her that there were seventeen letters from charities, eight from interior decorators, eleven from night clubs, tourist agencies, bootleggers, churches, hotels, and detective agencies, and several more from the organizers of subscription dances and banquets. From the very bottom of the pile, Wee pulled out a letter from Poop & Galley, the well-known yacht

brokers. It took the form of a memo on a blue slip pinned to a folder made of deckle-edged paper. Wee read the memo aloud: —

"MY DEAR MR. MCCOY: —

"We consider the attached yacht offering one of the most irresistible propositions we have to offer you. Why not act at once?

"Don't you want more details?

"G. HERBERT GALLEY, *President* "

"The details," said Wee, skimming through the folder, "are a steam yacht, 215 feet long, with Sun Room, Lounge Room, Dining Salon, ten Guests' and Masters' Staterooms, Pantry, Galley, and Engine Room complete. No, I don't see any Bowling Alley. Would you take a yacht without a bowling alley?"

"What do you want with a bowling alley at sea?" said Jerry, roughly.

"Why," said Wee, "the rolling of the ship makes bowling ever so much more sporty and amusing. Same with billiards. Same with racquets. By the way, how are you getting along with your racquets, Jerry?"

"Pretty well, I guess," said Jerry. "The instructor is giving me a lot of praise, and I can serve hard — I really can."

Like any other male when asked about his athletic prowess, Jerry thereupon seized the nearest imple-

ment, which happened to be an umbrella, and swung it in fine swishing circles around his head.

"That 's fine," said Wee encouragingly, "because Mr. Clarence Pell wants to give you a game this week."

"Clarence Pell wants to give *me* a game!"

"Yes. He was that very nice and good-looking man I sat beside at dinner last week—at the Robinsons', you remember. You said it was just like getting into society again, after so much slumming with Boxy Keck & Co."

"Did I?"

"You did! Jerry, I'm afraid you're an incurable snob."

He laughed. But he stopped soon, remembering her remark about Mr. Pell. He was nearly always the national champion in racquets. Champion of the United States and Canada, too. A phenomenal player, the perpetual champion.

"Did you really tell Mr. Pell about me?" Jerry gasped.

"Of course I did. And I told him the very amusing thing you had said on the day you took your first racquets lesson, you know."

"What was the very amusing thing I said?"

"You said that you could n't bear to be merely an average player of anything. You were the best football player in Harvard, and the best oarsman. Don't scowl so, Jerry—you know you were. And

you told me that you knew you had n't a chance to be national champion in golf, or tennis, or squash, or any of those overcrowded games. But you went on to say that racquets is such an undercrowded game that only Mr. Pell himself, and Mr. Stanley Mortimer, and perhaps five or six others play it at all. And as Mr. Pell is eighteen years older than you are, you would surely be able to beat him sooner or later — perhaps on his sixtieth birthday, when you will be only a young man of forty-two!”

“And you told *that* to Mr. Pell?”

“Of course I did. It amused him very much.”

Jerry looked so sick, so much as if he were about to faint, that Wee went to the cellaret for brandy. He waved it aside, and then threw himself full length on the sofa, face down.

“Anything I may have told you was a joke,” he said, with his voice heavily muffled by the pillows. “Surely you don’t take my confidences, and tell them at dinner tables — as jokes!”

“But I was so pleased, so proud of you,” said Wee. “I thought you were getting seriously interested in something. You seemed to have a goal. You were as excited and interested about racquets as you used to be about football — or about selling bonds.”

No answer came from Jerry. After a time Wee went over and kissed the back of his neck.

“Cheer up,” she said. “If there’s any damage it’s all over, and worrying about it won’t help at all.

Mr. Pell was n't annoyed at all. On the contrary, I met him on the street yesterday, and he stopped and asked me when you were coming over to the Racquet Club to do him down! He said he'll be free any afternoon this week, and will be ever so glad to see you."

"He did, did he?"

"For Heaven's sake, stop being so silly. I'm going out now, and I'm lunching with Lily and Pat, so we won't meet until this evening. Please try to be on time, Jerry. You ought to start dressing not later than seven. Dinner will be at eight."

"I hate dinners!" It was a muffled snort.

Across the table at the Colony that evening Jerry heard Wee talking raptly to Mr. Wyeth, who sat at her right. "I am so bored with the Spanish and Moorish styles in all their forms," she said. And a little later: "But would n't the Taj Mahal be a lovely thing to adapt for a home, Mr. Wyeth—a winter home in Florida?" And then: "Yes, I have seen pictures of it. It is like a dream in marble . . . a great marble bubble, rising against a blue tropical sky."

Jerry tried not to listen, but while Alice Thorpley's drawling voice droned in his ear he tried to estimate the cost of a great marble bubble rising against a blue tropical sky. Next day he startled the librarian at the Harvard Club by demanding

volume XVII (Tab-Tit) of the Encyclopædia Britannica.

When the green-bound volume was laid in his hand, as dust-encrusted as an old bottle of port, he turned its leaves until he found an astoundingly lyrical description of the great Indian palace, the most beautiful building in the world. There was no picture, unfortunately. But Jerry did n't have to wait long for one. When he went home at six o'clock that evening he found Wee poring absordedly over some sketches on drawing paper, rubber-stamped "F. Marion Wyeth, Architect."

"Is n't it amazing?" she said. "So many architects want to cram their own pet ideas down your throat, but Mr. Wyeth confessed that he had n't even dreamed of the Taj Mahal until I suggested it. He has made *such* an amusing sketch—he shows how it would look, not merely in Palm Beach, where it would be quite appropriate, but on the water side of Beacon Street."

Before Jerry's stupefied eyes she spread out a sheet which bore a picture so carefully executed that Mr. Wyeth must have gone directly from the dining table to his drawing board and worked with pencils and water colors all night and day.

In his sketch a whole block of warty old brown-stone buildings between Dartmouth and Exeter Streets had been razed, and in their place a great

white marble bubble soared into the air, with four tall minarets around it.

"This is only a hasty sketch," Wee explained. "Mr. Wyeth would want to go to Agra before making formal plans and I think it would be an economy to send him there."

"A good idea. Let's send him there on a one-way ticket at once."

"Of course not! We shall never want to build a big house like that in Boston, refreshing and stimulating to Boston as it would be. We want to make plans for a Palm Beach house, and if you will look on the back of that large sketch you will see what Mr. Wyeth suggests for Florida."

It was a smaller house that met Jerry's eye, but it was in the same Indian style of incredible magnificence, and a large white marble bubble surmounted it.

"Perhaps we could n't inlay the spandrels with semiprecious stones, as in the Taj Mahal itself. But this is a darn sight more striking than one of those common Spanish-type houses, is n't it? There are loathsome nests of them all over Long Island already, and they are just as common as English-type homes. I want something that will be all our own."

Jerry blinked his eyes rapidly, smoothed his brow with his finger tips, and lay down on the *art moderne* bed. The bed was n't really a good example, Wee knew; it was only a hotel's crude, machine-made

approximation of the truly modern beds that she was having built for the penthouse. In fact the Archduke's conception of *art moderne* was altogether machine made. The penthouse would not err in that direction. The penthouse would be neither old-fashioned nor modern; it would represent the free, untrammelled point of view of twenty, perhaps fifty years from now. Wee told Jerry that, in all New York, there were only a few large pieces that could be put into it. All the others had to be made.

This took a great deal of time, but Jerry did not regret the delay; he wondered now and then what the bills for making these articles would be, just as he wondered how long Wee's explosion into profligate spending would last.

He read, surreptitiously, all the books on psychiatry he could find. They perplexed him, and yet there was an undercurrent of sense in them. The use of the term "explosion" by their authors reassured him. He knew that Wee was exploding mentally like a bomb. She had been compressed spiritually during all her years in Boston and she was now bursting into freedom. Day after day, she found new ways in which to burst.

The Valkyrie's wheel base proved far too long for New York traffic. It was like trying to run a railroad car through the shrieking jams in the streets.

So the Valkyrie sat in its garage, and a very smart

town brougham, on a Sunbeam chassis, was bought and used.

Christmas came, and Jerry and Wee decided that they would not try to give each other anything. After that, like all husbands and wives, they went out and looked feebly for possible gifts.

Jerry solved the problem at last in the fur department of the most fashionable importer on Fifty-seventh Street. He looked at sable wraps, but the price tickets appalled him. He selected a mink coat and enclosed a card on which he wrote: —

“Minks for the Minx.”

It was pleasant to see Wee's smile when she opened that box on Christmas morning, and Jerry smiled too. But the smile left his face at Wee's first words: —

“Merry Christmas, Jerry. I have bought you an airplane! See, here's a toy one to amuse you till you see the real thing. Don't you think it will be amusing to take our first flight on Christmas Day?”

Jerry shivered, though the room was warm.

“Why do you want to spend Christmas in this way?” he asked.

“Last year I distributed baskets in Roxbury on Christmas Eve. Then I put lighted candles in Aunt Carrie's windows and watched them to see that they did n't set the house on fire. After that I took some children to sing carols in the street. Next day I took Uncle Roger a present —”

"May I ask what?" said Jerry.

"A pigskin coin purse," said Wee. "Aunt Carrie and I spent a quiet afternoon, and some of her friends came in for tea. It was a dull day, a horrible day. I think flying our own airplane this Christmas will be a delightful change."

"How are you and I going to fly?"

"Why," said Wee, wide-eyed, "I thought everybody knew that modern airplanes come with pilots, just as really *good* automobiles come with chauffeurs. Our man is Mr. Eddie Britt. He's waiting for us now."

"But I can't let you fly, because—because it's so risky! Because people get killed, all the time, in airplanes."

She looked at him, and there was a tenderness in his eyes that made her Christmas a success.

"Jerry," she said softly, "suppose you don't talk like that until you've been up in the air!"

He put on his clothes, hoping he had not shown her that her gift was unwelcome. An airplane! An airplane in which he was expected to fly at once! Jerry was among the people who expect to fly some day—some day in the distant future, when everybody will be flying. He had few fears that he could not master. He had not flinched from the bumps and bangs of football, the dislocated knees and shoulders, the pain of a broken jaw. A man can bear all that for his college, and his own self-respect. And Jerry

was not afraid of horses; a man can sit tight, even if he is not a good rider, and commend his soul to God, and shut his eyes, and get over a fence somehow. And if he does n't, it's only a broken wrist or collar bone. But flying! Flying introduces a new set of terrors—old, primitive terrors of falling from great heights, and new terrors that spring from the knowledge that, at any moment, the aviator may be roasted alive under his crashed and blazing plane.

Jerry stuck out his jaw, and forced himself to smile.

Little voices began to whisper reassurances into his ear. The art of aviation has taken giant strides. Flying is safe, swift, economical, clean. It is actually safer than driving a car. There are no traffic jams in the air, no drunken drivers speeding out of side streets. All sorts of people are flying. Think of Commander Byrd, who soared over the North Pole; think of that heroic young man who flew from New York to Paris. What was *his* name? Lindstrom? No, Lindbergh, of course.

Jerry thought of Lindbergh, and his confidence was much improved when he found that Eddie Britt looked very much like him. He was a blond, blue-eyed, debonair young man who arrived in a high-powered green roadster without a top.

"That's my new baby," said Eddie Britt.

He invited them to ride to the flying field in this speedy car, and Wee accepted.

"My husband," she said, "has the feeling that flying is too risky for us."

"Risky!" said Mr. Britt, spitting out his gum. "Gee, lady, you would take more risks driving across Times Square."

By way of proving these comforting words, he turned the roadster around in the middle of Park Avenue and headed it toward Times Square. Jerry and Wee were so surprised that they did not immediately restrain Mr. Britt. He raced downtown at a speed far in excess of the crawling pace of the cars and busses on Fifth Avenue. It was interesting to notice how he shot around slower cars, and how he anticipated the change of the lights from red to green and put his car into full headway, while the others were still standing still.

Red traffic signals made very little difference indeed to Mr. Britt. He seemed to have a knack of not seeing them until it was just too late to halt. By the time Wee had persuaded him to give up the idea of going over to Times Square to demonstrate how many risks you take in an automobile there, they had reached Forty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue. The traffic going north and south was halted by a red light.

"All right!" said Eddie Britt cheerfully. "We'll make Park Avenue before this light changes."

Turning left, he shot through Forty-fourth Street at a terrific speed, turned north on Vanderbilt

Avenue,—speeding two blocks against the traffic light,—and turned east again to Park Avenue. The signal had just changed as they reached the corner, and cars had already begun to move downtown, but Eddie Britt wormed his way past them, made another left turn, and headed north on Park Avenue.

The speedometer now registered forty-five miles an hour. Fortunately the traffic was not very heavy. Jerry turned around to see why no motorcycle policeman was pursuing them for these incredible violations of the rules against speeding and reckless driving. What did the law say about the operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor? No! It would be unfair to Mr. Britt to think he had taken a drink. His intoxication was of a different kind. He was of that happy mechanical race who are instantly made insane by the presence of any large, high-powered piece of machinery.

"This car can do seventy," said Eddie Britt. "I say, let her do it."

The car would have done it, but its flight was ignominiously checked by a hook and ladder which extended clear across Park Avenue on Fifty-eighth Street. Mr. Britt stopped with a screeching of brakes that outdid the siren on the fire engine.

"These Christmas trees is dangerous things," he said. "I'll bet this fire was caused by a Christmas tree."

As he spoke, a red-faced policeman, almost speechless with fury, approached the car.

"Jail," whispered Jerry to Wee. "Well, this little ride's been quite enough excitement for your Christmas Day."

Mr. Britt smiled meaningly at the policeman, and spoke first.

"You ought to have your gold teeth filled," he said, gently.

The policeman stepped back a pace, grinned, and motioned to Mr. Britt to proceed. The remark had been a password, obviously. Jerry began to suspect that there is a strange, unknown world in America—a world in which maniac drivers, and bootleggers, and policemen, and gunmen, and gamblers are all brothers—a world of strange passwords and secret signals—a sort of mysterious brotherhood into which outsiders can never come.

Mr. Britt kept his speedometer between sixty and seventy miles all the way across the bridge and down the long road to Roosevelt field, flirting with death at every corner. But he never stopped talking about the joys of flying, and the perils of driving on the road.

He led Jerry and Wee into a large hangar, full of airplanes.

"There's your ship," he said. "It's a Chummy Cloverleaf Air Sedan, made by the Air King Corporation of Detroit."

He spat, rather disparagingly, on the gleaming white rubber tire of its wheel.

Wee was quivering with delight. She showed Jerry the three seats arranged chummily around the joystick and other controls. Opening the door, she followed him into the little cabin and pointed out the flower holder on the wall, the vanity case, the electric cigarette lighter, and the tiny locker containing a cocktail shaker.

"They did n't forget anything, did they?" cried Wee.

"Yes," answered Mr. Britt, morosely, "they forgot the motor. It was to be here yesterday and it ain't come. This ship can't fly to-day."

"Oh!" said Wee.

"I'm very sorry," said Jerry untruthfully, "but it has been fine to see the ship."

"How about a nice little joy ride in my bus?" said Mr. Britt. "It's a *real* job."

He led them across the hangar and showed them a small and businesslike little gray monoplane with an enormous radial motor and very short wings.

"Could we go up in that?" asked Wee.

"I'll say we can!" answered Mr. Britt.

He gave orders and the little monoplane was rolled out of the hangar by four mechanics, and its motor warmed up with a deafening roar. Then he handed Wee a greasy leather helmet, and helped her with ceremony into the front seat.

"Now you will see something, brother," he said to Jerry.

Jerry watched this tiny-winged airplane run forward across the field, take off, and roar loudly up into the air. It was a mile away almost before he knew it had started. When it turned its side to him, it looked like a mosquito larva swimming securely in its own element; and so did all the other airplanes that were circling over the great Hempstead plain.

So this was flying! It seemed a beautiful, a poetical way to spend Christmas. After the perils of driving with Mr. Britt, perhaps flying would be an anticlimax, almost too safe, too languid.

Mr. Britt landed, not twenty feet from where Jerry stood, as lightly as an autumn leaf drifting down on a pool. The little monoplane ran smoothly along the ground until it could be turned and brought back.

Wee jumped down, her eyes shining.

"It's divine, Jerry," she said. "I feel so selfish to have taken the first hop! Mr. Britt calls it a hop."

Jerry put the helmet on his head and walked out to the plane. He felt exhilarated and eager. The motor was now running so slowly that it was quite possible to hear Mr. Britt's words.

"I handed the little lady an easy ride," he said. "How do you like this ship? I rebuilt her myself."

"She seems to fly very well," said Jerry, climbing into the front seat.

"You'll see how well she flies. Fasten that safety belt tight!"

Jerry strapped himself fast into a small, bucket-shaped seat, with his head so near the engine that he could smell it. The plane was open, not enclosed. Mr. Britt sat in the seat behind.

"Rebuilt her myself," he said again. "Lots of power and small wings. Fine for stunts."

"Are we going to do stunts?" asked Jerry, weakly.

"Sure! It's the quickest way to learn to fly. See what the ship will do and then do it yourself. Fasten that belt tight!"

They were off, bumping at first over the rough field and then climbing almost straight upward in a hurricane of wind and noise. It was a high-powered engine, no doubt of that. It seemed to jerk them vertically into the air, like a runaway elevator.

Jerry suddenly remembered the roller coasters at amusement parks. The loop the loop, the dip of death! He had always hated these things, full of screaming passengers. First you went up, up, up, wishing you had stayed on the ground. Then you dived sickeningly down, lurching from side to side in an agony of noise and speed.

Mr. Britt did not dive. At a height that made Jerry feel sick, after he had taken one short glance

over the side, Mr. Britt cut off the motor and shouted, "Here's a pretty one—the Barrel Roll."

Jerry felt the plane lurch sideways, with the engine roaring again. Then he saw the earth, an enormous brown saucer, roll over his head. He knew, during several seconds, that he was suspended upside down with only the safety belt holding him from plunging five thousand feet down to the ground.

Then the earth snapped into position again, and Jerry fought back an overmastering sickness at the pit of his stomach, just as Mr. Britt put the ship into a steep dive.

Jerry crouched in his seat; then he saw the earth turning over and over him. He looked over the side and saw they were diving again. He looked up, and felt his stomach surging against the safety belt with a violence that nearly cut him in two.

"Three loops!" yelled Mr. Britt, a few seconds later. "Not much to *them*! Here's a real one—the Falling Leaf."

Jerry's head snapped sideways until his ear touched his right shoulder. He struggled to sit erect and balance the plane, but the plane would n't be balanced. It was now spinning and swishing to the left with a rush that made it vibrate and scream. Then it paused, staggered, lost its balance, and slid screaming to the right.

Jerry closed his eyes. But he could not keep them

closed. The last shreds of his courage were being whipped away by the terrific gale of wind that beat from all directions—against his face and ears and the back of his head. He would have liked to keep his eyes shut, but instinct told him to open them and look out and guess how many instants of life remained before the plane crashed to the ground.

Suddenly they were going up again—up, up, until the ground was just a mottled, brownish blur, and on both horizons water gleaming light green in the sun could be seen. Jerry knew they must have reached an incredible height, perhaps two or three miles. A man falling from that height would be dashed into bloody pulp.

The little monoplane was still holding together. That was surprising. It seemed incredible that any steel, any wood, any cotton or silk, could bear the terrific strains through which they had passed. Eddie Britt leveled off, and started to fly in short, bumpy jerks like a buck-jumping horse.

Jerry felt as though he were tied to a board which dashed spinning and screaming through space. It was like being tied to a board with a demon behind you—a demon who hooted and screamed in your ears. The great saucer of the earth did inconceivable gymnastics, now rushing straight up at them, now spinning, now rocking crazily over their heads. "Tail Spin!" called Eddie Britt.

It was during the tail spin that Jerry McCoy was

sick. He came out of this seizure just in time to hear Mr. Britt's voice in tones of genuine triumph. "We'll finish with an Outside Loop!" he roared. "It has never been done with a passenger. But we'll show them something!"

The plane darted straight down for a long, long time; then it turned over forward, until Jerry and Mr. Britt were sitting upside down, a thousand feet above the field. Then it turned still farther until they found themselves completing the first outside loop with passenger in the history of flight.

"Lucky these belts held," said the demon, cheerfully. "Now we'll just side-slip down to the field."

The side-slip lasted until Jerry was straining against the other side of the airplane as though he could somehow put it on an even keel. He was so dizzy that it was a long time before he realized that the horrible motion had stopped and that the plane was running gently over the ground toward Wee.

"Oh, it was wonderful to see you do those easy, graceful manœuvres!" she cried. "So gentle, so rhythmic! Mr. Britt flies exactly as if he were dancing."

"Mr. Britt," said Jerry, "flies like a bat out of hell."

"It's a shame," said the flattered pilot, "that we can't do none of that stuff in your family bus."

"A shame, indeed!" said Jerry, between set teeth. He pinched himself as if he were amazed to find that

he was still solid flesh and bone. Faintly, through his roaring eardrums, he heard the screech of a locomotive whistle. He staggered and recovered himself.

"It's too cold to drive back to town," he said.
"Let's go by train."

XVI

SOUND, PROFITABLE BUSINESS AT HOME

"YOUR wife said you are pretty hot stuff at racquets," said the almost perpetual champion, in his cordial voice. "Come to the club with me now."

Jerry's immediate and horrified disclaimers were swept away in the flood of Mr. Pell's heartiness. The great player refused to hear any excuse.

"But I'd like to know why you took up racquets," he said as they were stripping off their clothes in the dressing room.

"Well, sir," began Jerry, "I guess you will think it was a crazy idea, Mr. Pell, but I had a lot of fun playing games at Harvard, and I wanted to find some game here that would give me a chance to do well. Every ribbon clerk and bond salesman in New York seems to be playing squash, and I would n't have a chance at that. And a boy ought to start golf at ten and take a lesson every day for fifteen years if he wants to be good; and they are starting polo even younger at Aiken, and so —"

"And so," said Mr. Pell, "you are going to pick on me!"

A tremendous blush started over Jerry's face, ran down his neck, and he seemed to be blushing all over.

"Oh, no, sir. I am no good at all. It's very kind of you to let me play with you."

"It's a pleasure."

With that the champion led the way into the court, and Jerry found himself preparing to play Clarence C. Pell. The host's geniality was unshaken, even after he had spun his bat and Jerry had failed to call "Rough" or "Smooth." He spun his bat again and this time Jerry gulped, "Rough—I mean smooth."

"Excellent," said Mr. Pell. "I will serve."

He picked up the bat and served.

Jerry made a lurching stroke, missed, and butted the side wall with his head.

"Always watch the ball until it strikes your bat," advised Mr. Pell.

He served again. This time the ball came so fast that Jerry could not see it. It must have hit the front wall, for he heard it. Immediately afterward, it hit him hard on the chin.

"It did n't hit my bat," he complained. "It hit me."

"You're supposed to hit it, or else dodge," said the expert. "We will now try guile, instead of brute strength."

He served again, reducing the speed so much that

the ball was plainly visible, but putting such a terrific cut on it that Jerry, swinging desperately, missed and broke his bat against the wall.

"Three-fourteen," said Mr. Pell. "I forgot to say that I am giving you fourteen."

Despite this huge handicap, the match ended in fifteen minutes. Jerry had only served three times, Mr. Pell conceding this privilege to him on the next to last point of each game.

Jerry could hardly walk out to the dressing room, when it was all over. He had a rising bump on his head from his collision with the side wall, and what seemed to be a fractured hip from a similar collision with Mr. Pell.

Mr. Pell did not limp, however. He remained in the court to practise with a professional, and the ball darted and spun around the walls so fast that Jerry's eye could hardly follow it. It looked to him like some very beautiful feat of oriental magic done by great acrobats. It was faster than any stage juggling he had ever seen, but he supposed that the Maharajah who once lived in the Taj Mahal might have had jugglers as quick, or nearly as quick, of eye and hand as this cheery, genial racquets champion and the professional player who darted with him in an intricate step dance around the court.

No game is faster than racquets, none better worth watching. But Jerry watched for only a moment and then hobbled out to a bench in the locker room

and lay flat on his back, with one hand on his swollen jaw and the other against his throbbing hip.

"I'm not going to play Mr. Pell again," he thought, despairingly, "not even when I'm eighty-two and he's a hundred! It's not possible to beat these New Yorkers at their own games. It can't be done."

The quest of art was somehow even less satisfactory than the pursuit of racquets. During his summer vacations in Maine, Jerry had achieved rather pleasant results, in water colors—sweeping, impressionistic seascapes in green and gray. He knew they were amateurish, but they contented him.

Now he had to draw from plaster casts at the Art Students League; he knew that good drawing is the basis of all good art, and he struggled along until he was admitted into the life class. Drawing was not his forte. The models were phlegmatic ladies from Scandinavian countries; he found it impossible to translate their plump pink contours to drawing paper, with charcoal.

"My water colors used to look as if a pretty good artist had done them when drunk," he confided to Wee. "But my nudes look like the efforts of small boys on barn doors. Even if I could draw a creditable nude, who would want the picture of a Swedish chambermaid surprised in the bath?"

"Zorn made even *that* beautiful," said Wee.

"Well, I'm going to leave art in the lurch. I'm not going to take it up again till I can see a breaking wave and some sea gulls again. Or a lighthouse. Lighthouses are the easiest of all buildings to draw — and the gulls are the easiest of birds."

"That sounds like Palm Beach to me," said Wee.

"No! It does n't sound a bit like Palm Beach. No great painting has ever been made at Palm Beach, I am sure. Maine is what I want — and how can I go to Maine in the middle of winter?"

"You can't, very well. I just could n't spare you, Jerry. We are going to have our housewarming party next week, you know."

"For a flock of night birds? Our regular flock?"

"I've invited Boxy, if that's what you mean." Wee's tone was stiff. "And the Major, and Alice Thorpley, and Jeff Cubitt. I'm sorry his wife has left him; I rather liked her."

"He is n't sorry. He is n't imaginative enough. He has n't *any* imagination, Wee — I'll bet you he'll marry another woman just like her. That's all divorce ever does for boobs."

"Jeff is n't a boob. He is one of the most interesting talkers I know."

"I'm speaking of divorce," Jerry said. "It seems to me you don't gain anything by swapping one orange-lipped wife for another one — or by trading in your real-estate husband for a stockbroker."

"Well, it's a change."

"Not enough of a change. Thank God, I don't want to divorce you, and you have n't said anything about divorcing me. If I could divorce you and get a beautiful South Sea Islander, complete with island, there might be something in it. At least, I'd have a change. And you'd get real variety if you married a Czechoslovakian nobleman, instead of me. But what would you get if you took on George Hamill or Sam Purvis for a second husband? That's the trouble with modern divorce, Wee. It's so unimaginative. I know women whose first and second husbands are so much alike that they roomed together in college. What's the use of swapping one old Ford for another one?"

"The new man might be a *little* different," said Wee. "He might have been a pole vaulter, instead of rowing in the crew."

"A fine lot of good that would do! We are living here among people who are just as promiscuous as cats in a back yard. Good morning, Mrs. Grimalkin, and how is Tom? Oh, did n't you know I had to divorce Tom, and I'm Mrs. Gilbert Micely, now? Tom has married Pussie Yardley, and they are very happy up the Hudson in her family house. The Rattery, you know. Cats in an alley, Wee. Don't let's you and me be cats!"

"Certainly not," said Wee.

Jerry's increasing dislike for all her new friends disturbed her more than she cared to show him. She

telegraphed to Boston to George Hamill, urging him to come to the housewarming and bring Sam Purvis and Eph Smith. She did not want the Freddy Wilsons, but she summoned them by telephone out of their nest on Cow Lane, and was relieved to hear that Frederica Wilson could not come. Freddy was so much more amusing when poor, dowdy Frederica had to stay at home with the babies. Two babies in twelve months! It was overproduction. But Wee had a moment of honesty in which she told herself that every Boston woman used to have babies just as fast as that, or faster.

"And," said Wee to herself, candidly, "it's a damned good thing to do."

It was curious how often she swore, she thought. In the old days she used the short and ugly words whenever necessary — but now she used them automatically, without thinking. They had become worn coins in her vocabulary; they meant nothing at all.

She went out and bought herself a hat. In her darkest moments, in Boston, that act had been symbolic. Once — it was the most criminal act in all her life — she had been so goaded, so thumped and punched and beaten down in spirit by Uncle Roger that she went to a store and bought a twenty-five-dollar hat with money belonging to the St. Botolph Lend-a-Hand Society, whose treasurer she was at the time. She had paid the money back into

the society's treasury five days later; but the memory of that embezzlement could make her blush and feel shivery, even now. Yet the hat had helped! She had put it on and walked home down Beacon Street, and across Exeter to Marlboro, hoping that people would notice it. And they did. Three old ladies stopped to comment on it. A red hat, with a large feather — a symbolic hat!

She bought another symbolic hat now. She brought it home to the Archduke—well, thank God, the Archduke would n't be home in one more week—and tried it on before the coffin-shaped glass.

"Lousy!" she said, and took it off, and let it fall on the floor. Then she kicked it under the bed—the *art moderne* bed. How tired one gets of *art moderne*! She had not made the mistake of using too much of it in the penthouse, anyway. Just a touch, here and there. The room she had arranged for Jerry was a knock-out! It was a library, a study, a den. No, not a den. It must never be called that. She remembered the horrible little den at Newtonhurst, with its plumbing fixtures. A stinking little den!

Jerry had n't seen his new room, yet. He had n't been allowed to go to the penthouse at all, while the painters and plasterers and paper hangers were walking around in it like people in a slow-motion movie. But Jerry would like his room—that knock-out

of a room! Cork walls and an aluminum ceiling. The last word!

Jerry would like his room . . .

Damn it, Jerry would *not* like his room. He would loathe it. Jerry really liked darkness, and stuffiness, and comfort—an overstuffed easy-chair, with a reading lamp over it, and a pipe rack, and a spittoon. That is what men really like. And a pair of old slippers with their soles so scorched by the fire that they smell. And a shower bath. And sporting prints. Everything dark and cluttered and dingy—that's what men like, blast their souls!

Cork walls and an aluminum ceiling! Lily Damfreville had promised it would be the last word. . . .

Wee flung herself face down on the bed, wriggling from one side to the other, and trying to make herself comfortable. It could n't be done. Damn it, why did she feel so queer?

The housewarming party was a great success.

All the men from Boston came, looking very neat and serious in their shawl-collar Tuxedos; and Jerry's father came from Philadelphia—he had discovered in Italy such a perfect Botticelli for a friend that he had felt it necessary to travel to America with it. And Frederica Wilson came after all; she had found such a wonderful little woman at Great Neck that she thought the babies would be quite safe. She wore a very dowdy satin dress indeed, and Jerry

was so delighted to see her that he scarcely moved from her side all evening, and Wee had to tell him twice that Alice Thorpley was all alone, and bored.

Even Eph Smith, so loquacious in his own surroundings, was stunned into silence by the room with cork walls and aluminum ceiling. But Sam Purvis had brought Jerry's trophy oar all the way over from Boston in the baggage car, and insisted on hanging it in the place of honor over the tiny, high fireplace with its glass shelves.

"It looks like—" began Pat Damfreville; and then, noticing the gleam of high pride in the corner of Jerry's eye, she amended her sentence to, "It absolutely *makes* the room!"

There were *divertissements* after dinner. But Boxy Keck was so carried away by the presence of a new audience that he could hardly let the visiting professionals do their turns. "Do you know the difference between New York and Boston?" he asked; and without waiting for a reply, he went on to explain that a long-distance call makes everything clear.

"In New York the operator says, 'I will give you long distance,' which suggests that you have the whole country at your disposal. But in Boston the operator says primly, 'I will connect you with toll,' which is a Puritan way of saying, 'Remember that all this must be paid for. Be economical, and keep your mind on the day of reckoning.'"

Jerry's father snorted faintly over his liqueur, but the others were charmed. They were still more charmed when Boxy and a singer from the Metropolitan—Jerry never did hear her name—gave the whole of "*Cavalleria Rusticana*," taking all the parts in the most surprising way.

"But you are my favorite co-star," he said to Pat Damfreville. "Come on, now. We will give the last act of 'Hamlet.' Oh, bother the words. Make them up as you go along. Blank verse, remember—very slow and loud."

They died, swooningly, all over the hearthrug; and so great was the applause that they died all over again, as Romeo and Juliet this time. They were just starting to die as Antony and Cleopatra when old Mr. McCoy went home.

But nobody else went home for a long time.

Major Steele-Bright wandered around all evening, looking almost gay. A thought had struck him, and it was obvious to Jerry what it was, though the Major did not put it into words. Having no place of his own in which to entertain, the Major was preparing to entertain—and be entertained—in Wee and Jerry's penthouse every night.

So, quite evidently, were Jeff Cubitt and Alice Thorpley, and Boxy Keck.

They all went away at last, and the host and hostess sat down on the great sofa in their living room.

"We've come a long way," Wee said.

"A long, long way."

"I want you to be happy," she said.

"I *am* happy," said he.

"I thought so — I really made myself think so — until Frederica Wilson came to-night."

"For God's sake!"

"Oh, I don't mean that, Jerry. I don't mean that you care about her. But you care for all the things she stands for."

"Which are?"

"Don't pin me down, Jerry. You know exactly what they are."

"Well, what if I do?"

"Suppose I lecture you a little," Wee said. "That's a Boston expression, not a New York one. But I'm going to lecture you, anyway. Everything that's happened is just what you wanted. You wanted to get me away from small things in Boston, did n't you? Well, it's all come true. Here we are, with the biggest city all around us. If you want books or art or music, they're all here. If you want finance, it's only a few minutes away by subway. If you want anything the world has to offer, just press a button for it, Jerry. Don't scowl at me. I'm giving you everything I've got."

"Except yourself."

"Just what do you mean by that?"

Jerry blushed and wriggled. "I did n't mean

to say that," he said, nervously. "I have you — all of you — and you're the sweetest thing in the world, if only — if only . . ."

"Please try to explain."

"I am, darling. It's only the things around you I mind. We have no business to be here, Wee. We ought to be out in Cow Lane this minute, living with young people just like ourselves — the nicest people there are. Your money is nearly all gone. I can't imagine where it's all gone to, really. But that German yacht you want to buy — that seventy-five-metre auxiliary schooner — will just about finish it. And the Palm Beach house. Wee, we can't afford to build a Palm Beach house. I told Mr. Wyeth so. He was very nice about it, and he said he will find us a small cottage there if you want to go down in February. He knows that we're fakes, you and I — fake millionaires, fake spenders, false alarms."

Wee was either laughing or crying. He was very near her, but he could n't tell which.

"We're out of our class," he said. "We ought not to be buying wine by the quart, but we're buying it by the jeroboam! That's a great joke on me, is n't it? We've got four or five toadies attached to us like leeches. I'm through! I loved this party to-night. It made me feel like Otis Skinner in 'Kismet.' A beggar with the wealth of Haroun-al-Raschid for one night! It was grand, Wee —

more fun than I've ever had. But it's the end. I don't care if it's selling bonds, or fishing flies out of inkwells, or acting as messenger boy — I'm going to get a job to-morrow and start earning some money for you."

She was laughing. It was the first time in weeks that he had seen her really laugh.

He did not meet her eye. To-morrow morning he would go humbly downtown, and start selling bonds all over again. He would go around from office to office begging his friends to buy. He would go downtown in the reeking subway, and come back in it at night. He would feel sick as the fast elevator in some office building made its jerky ascent from floor to floor. He would get to know hundreds of the houris who sit at office gates. They would say to him, "*Oo-oh*, if you had *on-lee* come yesterday, *Mis-ter McCoy*, he *would* have been here, but *to-day-ee* he called up to say that he had been *unexpected-lee* called from the *cit-ee*!" And sometimes, perhaps once or twice a week, one of the men he hounded would mumble an ungracious assent. And those would be the great hours of victory, the shining moments when Jerry McCoy, aggressive young bond salesman, would know that he was no mere spectator of the New York racket, but a worthy player of the great financial game.

"I'm going to work," he said.

"Jerry," said Wee, suddenly, "don't you ever notice anything? You're blind. You're blind as

a bat. I know that we are running through our million dollars pretty fast, Jerry, and I know you are all hot and bothered about it. But — Jerry — but — do I have to tell you? Do you want it in words of one syllable? Very well, then, my dear friend. When you see a young married lady lying down a great deal, and not feeling in absolutely robust health in the early mornings, and beginning to change the style of her clothes, and —”

“Oh! Oh, my dear!” Jerry dropped to his knees beside Wee and buried his face against the edge of the sofa.

“Don’t sell bonds,” said Wee. “There’s a little stranger coming in five months. I have given you so many hints for a week. Did n’t you see me counting on my fingers? Did n’t you hear me say that I did n’t think I could go to Kiel to see the yacht next May?”

“I’m a fool,” said Jerry. “In fact, I am a bigger fool than I thought. You bet I’ll sell bonds. I’ll sell them by the hundred, see if I don’t. If we ever needed money, we need it now! What’s the matter? Are you in pain?”

Wee had stopped laughing and was looking at him in wide-eyed surprise.

“You seem to have forgotten all about the deed, darling,” she said at last. “There’s *another* million due us when the little stranger arrives. You need n’t worry about making money, Jerry. We’ve got a sound, profitable business right here at home.”

XVII

A LADY AT BAY

DR. IRVING GORDON was a romantic-looking man. He was tall and very dark, with curly black hair on his head and the back of his fingers and wrists. His white teeth glittered as he advised Wee to lead a simple, restful life—to lie down for an hour every afternoon, to eat simple, nourishing foods, and get plenty of sleep.

Wee broke all these regulations so quickly and sweepingly that it seemed hopeless, after a month or two, to go back to the beginning and lead an existence so absurdly different from the normal course of life in New York.

Once she whispered to Jerry: "Just for the shock to Uncle Roger, I do hope it's going to be twins."

Twins! *Two* million dollars instead of one! Jerry gasped. He counted up on his own fingers. How quickly this child—these children—had started to come into the world. What had the deed said? "And for each such child the sum of one million dollars as hereinafter provided shall be paid by my trustees." Paid to Jerry and Wee!

He leaned nearer to her and whispered in her ear. "One child will do. We don't want to be hogs!"

Except for that short conversation, the whole subject was taboo.

Wee was not feeling very well. In fact, she had been feeling surprisingly unwell for many weeks before she went again to Dr. Gordon.

"Less dancing and more bridge," he said. "We doctors can do nothing for you, you know. I earn my fees by giving excellent advice which nobody follows."

Wee laughed, and said that when she was reduced to bridge she would send for him. He was the best player in New York, outside of the venerated professionals. He smiled, and said he would come at any time.

Wee did not sit after dinner stitching tiny white garments, nor did she encourage Jerry to read aloud to her the powerful New York editorial pages, or Count Keyserling's lugubrious prose. She went out to tea and to dinner every day; and she maintained her touch with all the good restaurants and with Nevada Finn.

Perhaps it was her father-in-law's doing. Mr. McCoy had obviously despised Boxy Keck. Whatever the reason, Wee began to receive invitations from the old, old New York families who have been prominent for years. And Wee charmed them, there was no doubt of that. She was such a strange

blend of Puritan and Bacchante—half a magnificently reared Boston young woman, half a butterfly of New York's gayest world.

Elderly men, with beautifully groomed hair and hard, intelligent faces, began to pay her marked attention. And Jerry was acceptable to them, too. His manners were excellent; he heard their stories to the end, and laughed huskily in the right places.

They dined one evening with the noblest family of all—the Walter Emerys. It was a party of twenty-six, neither too large nor too small for the Emery dining room. Their house was one of those large ones that are so rapidly being replaced by apartments on Fifth Avenue, facing the Park.

"And what do you hear from your dear father?" Mrs. Emery said to Jerry.

She had placed him on her left at dinner, and he was nervously coping with a squab.

"He has gone back to France," Jerry said.

"His visits are so fleeting," said the old lady. "He loves the south of France so much better than New York. And I do not blame him. On the contrary, I envy him his ability to go from place to place, sketching all the pretty bits."

"I think he is painting very little," Jerry said to her.

"That is a pity. He had a genuine talent, as Frank Duveneck and John Sargent always said."

"He is not very well," Jerry remarked. "Even

a very little exertion tires him. He spends his time selecting pictures for his friends."

"How charming! But your father always was charming. He was a great beau of mine, you know."

The old lady smiled, and talked vivaciously about New York in the eighties and nineties, when things were so different and life—as she knew it—was so much more dignified and agreeable. Jerry looked at the superb Italian fireplace behind her and glanced admiringly at the well-bred, elderly faces around the table.

He felt pleased by the stateliness of this dinner. Course followed course with slow precision. The four footmen received imperceptible signals from the butler—a thin, distinguished butler, who hovered eternally around Walter Emery's chair.

Walter Emery was the last of the Bourbons, Jerry knew—the last of those privileged, happy, powerful old men of the nineties, whose lives were above all the laws except the laws of finance, of politics, and of food. Mr. Emery had a round, rubicund face. There was power in it, though. He looked like Marshal Joffre; the thin, solicitous old butler behind him looked a little like Woodrow Wilson. Jerry smiled. It was pleasant to know that there are still homes like this in New York. Pleasant to be admitted to them for one's father's sake. He looked admiringly at old Mrs. Emery. How su-

perbly straight she sat, despite her seventy years. How gallantly she wore her great, square-cut emeralds and that incredible rope of pearls!

Wee drew him aside in the huge Empire drawing-room, after dinner.

"My God!" she said. "Is n't this terrible? Let's get out of it as quick as we can."

He frowned, and then smiled at her. Perhaps she was feeling ill. But her looks belied it. She was all slimness, all vivacity and charm.

"What did you mean, 'terrible'?" he asked, later, in the car. Wee had left among the first. In fact, she had left indecently soon after dinner, Jerry considered. "I thought it was a most interesting dinner," he said.

"Poky! Dull! Impossible!"

"Dull! Do you know that Mr. Emery was once Senator from New York, and also in one of President Roosevelt's cabinets?"

"You bet I know it," said Wee. "He told me the most boring stories about it. He may have been important once, but he's burned out like an old bulb. Why, Jerry, he's just an old fossil. No, he is n't. He said a couple of very clever things; but it was like sitting next to a mummy, just the same. How did you like the lady mummy, darling?"

"I admire Mrs. Emery very much."

Wee said nothing more until they arrived at the

Colony. It was a little early to go to Nevada Finn's. They were to meet Boxy and Alice at the Colony, and go on to the New Club Finn at twelve.

"Give me a drink, Boxy," said Wee. "I need something to brace me up. Oh, don't be silly. A lot of other women have had babies before now, have n't they?"

Boxy poured two fingers of Scotch from his gold flask — a present from Jerry and Wee. She sipped half of it, and poured the rest into Jerry's glass.

"I did n't mean to be coarse, and shock you," she said. "Well-bred people never mention the functions of nature. Uncle Roger said that, Jerry. Drink his health, won't you? It's all right now. I'm feeling like myself again."

"What hurt your proud spirit, my dear?" asked Alice Thorpley, in her slow drawl.

"I'll tell you at Nevada's," promised Wee.

They took a table near the wall, where the crush was least troublesome.

"I've seen old-fashioned life in New York," said Wee. "I've been to the kind of dinner you read about in Dickens and Thackeray. And it was wonderfully like the most exalted parties in Boston — the very best dinners and balls, you know. Oh!"

"Tell us if you must," said Boxy Keck.

"When I remember the large dances in Boston," Wee said, "I have a clear picture of an immense ball room painted a cold, merciless blue — a room with

a floor as hard as iron, and funny little round boxes for the dowagers; and an orchestra playing a funeral dirge in slow waltz time. And the women! The women look as if they had found the cleverest little sewing woman imaginable, to come by the day and make over last year's gowns. And the men — can't you just *see* the men, Jerry dear?"

"I'd like to see them — I would indeed!" said Jerry.

"Well, the students are pretty darned nice," admitted Wee. "But what about the older ones who have been so fearfully busy as trustees that they have n't really cared to keep up their dancing? The ones whose white gloves smell so powerfully of gasoline?"

"I know," Jerry said. "And what do we see here? A lot of fat, bloated animals dancing with girls who have n't enough clothes on! And among them are some of the nicest people in New York. The ones who look tired out, I mean. The ones who are entertaining out-of-town cousins or customers, who just must see the night life."

"Hear, hear!" said Boxy Keck.

"Jerry, darling," Alice Thorpley drawled. "How you do run on! What makes you so peevish these days? Here you're a famous man — you've got a great big bottle of wine named after you. Waiter, fill the gentleman's glass, and mine too."

The enormous bottle was lifted, tilted, and put back in its pail. Symbol and emblem of Nevada's hospitality, the jeroboam had been quickly copied by all other night clubs of taste and refinement. But at Nevada's it flourished best. Hardly a man, under the blaze of those compelling blue eyes, dared to proclaim himself less than an emperor—an emperor who bought wine by the gallon, instead of the measly quart. Laughingly she told Jerry that she would have a jeroboam engraved on her personal letter paper, and a jeroboam carved in gleaming, black marble over her grave.

"Your name is in *Variety*," said Boxy. "You are what I predicted—a famous man. As Alice says, what makes you so peevish? Can't you smile?"

"I'm peevish chiefly because I can't get Wee to go home," said Jerry. "Only an earthquake or some other act of God would persuade her to leave this filthy den before three o'clock in the morning."

But Jerry was wrong. Hardly were the words out of his mouth before Wee was standing up and flattening herself against the wall. Three ugly, hard-faced men in sack suits—men who had not taken the trouble to remove their derby hats—were talking loudly to Nevada Finn in the centre of the floor.

"All right, all right," said that lady in shrill tones. "Why can't you try to be gentlemen, you big

clowns? Make a fuss? You bet I won't make a fuss. Back home we don't waste powder on vermin like you. Wait, can't you, while I make a little speech to my jests!"

Then, turning with a gesture of the beautiful, sweeping kind used by Madame Roland when she addressed the revolutionary mob in Paris from the scaffold, Nevada Finn spread both her arms wide and addressed the whole room.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she said. "I regret to inform you that these three handsome boys are officers of the law; at least, two of them are detectives, and one is a fat slob from the District Attorney's office who is trying to grab a little cheap publicity for himself at the expense of a working girl. Not one of these three boors has any manners, as you will have noted from the fact that they probably eat at home with their hats on."

All three men at this point removed their head-pieces, and one of them placed his heavily ringed fingers on Nevada's bare shoulder. She recoiled, as Madame Roland may have shuddered away from the coarse touch of the executioner. Then she used, by a natural coincidence, practically the same words.

"Liberty! A lot of fine things are pulled off in the land of liberty. America is the sweet land of liberty, as we were all taught to sing in school when we were kiddies and totties and did n't know any better. If there is any crime committed in this

place to-night, it is the crime of putting a padlock on it and preventing refined people from spending the evening in a refined way. Say, smarty, tell me one thing."

She hissed this question into the Assistant District Attorney's ear, and he looked up at her with surly attention.

"Where'd you get your evidence? You have n't been here yourself, but somebody's been spending the government's money or you would never have dared to be so coarse. Who's the Judas? Oh, I know! I see him now!"

She ran across the floor directly toward Jerry, who leaped to his feet, upset a chair, and flattened himself out next to Wee against the wall.

"I'm not the Judas!" he bleated grotesquely.

"*You!* I'm not thinking about *you!*" said Nevada. "I'm looking for that little dislocated, double-jointed, dissipated, disappointed tin-horn sport who calls himself Bogan. Where is he? The man who was here all the time, asking for so much service! My best customer! There he is, trying to hide behind Mr. Ginsburg and Mr. McCoy. No wonder he tries to hide behind refined people, like you, Mr. McCoy, and you, Mr. Ginsburg. He's a federal agent—a rat! Come out where I can look at you, you rat."

Mr. Bogan advanced with exactly the manner of a man trying to tiptoe around an infuriated wild

animal. After passing Nevada, he placed himself carefully behind the three raiders.

"You lay off Mr. Bogan," advised their leader. "When he gets evidence, he gets it right."

Nevada laughed. It was a hearty, glorious, war-like laugh; the laugh of a Texas ranger facing innumerable foes, or of General Custer making his last stand.

"He has been my best customer all season," she said. "He spent several thousand dollars of Uncle Sam's money in here, and the taxpayers ought to be delighted he drank so much wine. Well, ladies and gentlemen, this concludes our entertainment for to-night. You will now pass out quietly, leaving no articles in the seats, and remembering to take any revolvers, shotguns, spare tires, or babies you may have checked with the gentlemanly attendants in the cloakrooms. I wish you all health, wealth, and prosperity, and beg to remain, yours till hell freezes, Nevada Finn!"

She motioned to her orchestra leader to start up the band, and sang defiantly as the guests filed to the door. What she sang was "The Prisoner's Song."

"Oh, I wish I had someone to love me,
Someone to call me their own . . ."

XVIII

GOOD GIRL

JERRY woke at last, swimming up into consciousness from under deep waves of sleep. He did not know the time. It might be midnight, or three o'clock in the morning. All he knew was that the windows were still dark, and that Wee was shaking him with her small, firm hand.

"Wake up, Jerry! You must wake up! The party's begun!"

Suddenly all his senses came to him, and he was out of bed in one bound.

"I'll telephone right away," he said.

He jiggled the telephone for what seemed like many minutes before Central's sleepy voice said, "Number, please."

Then he could n't decide, for a long moment, whether to call Miss Macmillan's Maternity Hospital first, or the garage where the cars were kept. It was Wee who told him. "Send for the car, Jerry," she called. He gave the garage number. There was no answer for a long time. "They do not answer," said Central.

"They must answer!" shouted Jerry, savagely. "It's a garage with all-night service. Keep ringing them."

"*Bzz-bzz-bzz!*" went the tiny voice of the telephone in his ear. At last came the voice of a garage attendant—a new man, apparently, who could n't get Jerry's name nor his address. Jerry spelled his name. "Mr. J. M-c-C-o-y!" he shouted. "McCoy! Do you understand me? McCoy!"

"Mr. Moy?"

Jerry slammed the telephone back on the hook.

"We'll take a taxi," he said, and used the house telephone, shouting through it for the janitor.

"Ay'm sorry," came a fatigued Scandinavian voice. "He seeck. Doctor told him not to get oop for *anything!*"

"Well, get me a taxi at once," said Jerry, savagely. "Get it yourself. I don't give a damn if you are in bed! My wife is—my wife is very ill. I must take her to a hospital at once."

"You want an ambulance, Meester?"

"A taxi, I said!" snapped Jerry; and turned back from the telephone to Wee.

"Shall I send for Dr. Gordon at once, darling?" he asked, trying to keep his voice steady.

Wee was at her dressing table, completely dressed and with her hat and overcoat on. She was calmly powdering her nose.

"Call Miss Macmillan," she said. "Tell her we

will be there in a few minutes—as soon as you're dressed."

The reply from the private hospital was quick and professional. "We'll be waiting for you, Mr. McCoy," came a nasal, Prince Edward Island voice.

Jerry flung off his pajamas, and pulled on his trousers wrong side before. This had to be corrected, and before he had corrected it and found a shirt and a coat, Wee was ringing for the elevator. Her face was white, but her eyes shone.

Her self-possession was in striking contrast to Jerry's frenzy. She used her lipstick while she waited. But her hand was shaking, he could see. Why did n't the elevator come? He pressed the button a long time, and then shouted angrily down the shaft, thirty-one stories, before it came. The Sunbeam car was not waiting below, and there was no sign of it in any direction. The janitor's wife had not left her bed. Another shattering delay took place before the elevator boy could run to Third Avenue and come back in a night-hawk taxicab.

The cab seemed to be one of those very early Battle of the Marne models, with a fatigued engine and no springs at all. It jolted, and bounced, and clattered; and its speed seemed to Jerry to be the slowest he had ever known.

"I wish you'd be just a little bit calm," said Wee.

"Why can't you find something more interesting to talk about than the year this cab was made? Jerry, I think dawn in New York is a wonderful thing, don't you? See the colors of the sky. A little wind at this hour always seems to blow the night away. I've noticed it so often, coming home. It's the voice of the city whispering, instead of roaring as it does in the daytime."

"Is it?" Jerry's voice was dull and strained.

"Jerry, I sometimes wonder if New York is still green under all this gray asphalt. No, that's silly. It can't be. But somehow I think that the grass must be there, waiting for a time when all these miles and miles of cold dark artificial stone will crack, and split, and let the growing things through. And there are brooks still running under the pavements, Jerry. Somebody once told me there's a little brook under the Harvard Club which just won't be killed. They can't choke it, and some day — some day it will run over the building, Jerry, the ruins of the building."

"Mm-m!" he said, teeth clenched.

"I think it's up to you to amuse me, and not just make queer noises in your nose, while I amuse you," complained Wee. "But if you won't discuss dawn and green grass and brooks, you might at least tell me you love me."

"I do mean to tell you. I do love you. Everything that's happened during this hellish night ought

to show you that I do. Have you ever doubted it, Wee?"

"Sometimes, a little. No, I did n't mean to say that. If this cab jounces again, Jerry, I think I'll die. How can it bump so on a perfectly smooth pavement?"

Jerry banged his knuckles against the dirty glass window, and called to the driver.

"It's Isidor Slutsky," said Wee, peering at the photograph and name on the license card framed in the cab. "That's not a very romantic name, Jerry, is it? If we were n't in such a great hurry, my dear, I'd like to stop and tell you—in front of Mr. Isidor Slutsky as a witness—that I've always loved you, and that I've done all these things to you for your good. Yes! I thought I could make you like New York if I rubbed your nose in it hard enough. That is n't the right way to make you like anything, is it? I don't believe I'm thinking very clearly, Jerry. Instead of rubbing a puppy's nose—Oh!"

Jerry broke the jammed window with his elbow, and said to Mr. Slutsky in low, murderous tones: "If you bump once more, I'll break your neck."

The driver stopped the cab and seemed on the point of ejecting his passengers; but after one glance at Jerry's face and the breadth of his shoulders he drove sulkily forward again.

"I'm sorry I yelled," said Wee, calmly. "I feel quite all right now. All this is so unexpected,

Jerry dear. Putting it one way, Uncle Roger will lose about six weeks' interest on this new million dollars."

"Don't!"

"I won't. It was a joke in doubtful taste, I know. Perhaps Uncle Roger is n't going to lose anything. This may be—"

"May be what?"

"Our last ride together," said Wee.

They drew up at Miss Macmillan's door, which was opened after a short delay. There was a moment's embarrassment while Jerry looked through all his pockets and found he had brought no money to pay the fare. Instead of borrowing from the trained nurse at the top of the stairs, he told the man to wait. Then he went inside just in time to hear the nurse say, "You have come so much sooner than we expected, Mrs. McCoy, that I am afraid we have n't a room for you."

Jerry dashed forward.

"My wife is starting to have a baby," he said, in tones whose quivering intensity made even Wee jump. "You *must* have a room for her. You must find some place to—"

"Please, Mr. McCoy," said the young woman wearily. "Mrs. McCoy can just lie down here in the reception room, where she will be quiet until we can make other arrangements upstairs."

"This is murder!" muttered Jerry, before he

could check himself. Even at that moment he knew it was n't murder to ask a patient to lie down on a large davenport in a darkened room on the ground floor of a house full of highly trained attendants. But somehow the long weeks of suspense through which he had passed, and the nerve-racking mishaps of this night, took away all power of restraint.

He could not bear to look at Wee. He followed the retreating nurse halfway up the stairs, telling her in husky, agonized tones to send for Dr. Gordon at once. "Shall I call his office?" he cried.

"Dr. Gordon would be at his house at this time. We will notify him as soon as it is necessary."

"It's necessary now!" Jerry said. "Please tell him to be here within five minutes."

"Now, Mr. McCoy," said the nurse. "Could n't you go downstairs to the other reception room and read a magazine? Mrs. McCoy should be kept *very* quiet; perhaps she will take a little nap."

"A little nap!" said Jerry so loudly that another trained nurse came out on the landing and asked him, with caustic politeness, if he would please allow the other patients in the house to get their rest.

Somehow — perhaps five minutes later, or perhaps an eternity — Jerry found himself alone in a reception room, staring at back numbers of various literary magazines.

He could not sit down. Whenever the faintest

noise came from the room across the hall, he went out and stood beside its closed door, afraid to listen and afraid to go away.

An hour and a half passed. It was broad daylight. Once Jerry went out on the sidewalk and walked up and down, considering in his own mind whether a prosecuting attorney could deliver Miss Macmillan and Dr. Gordon over to justice for criminal neglect of his wife. He wanted no breakfast. It was the first morning in all his life he had gone without breakfast and he felt hollow and weak; but he passed a hole-in-the-wall restaurant on Sixth Avenue, and looked in, and saw people feeding, and decided that the mere sight of food made him feel sick.

Then he came back, just in time to meet a very smart cabriolet, and to see Dr. Gordon enter the house. Jerry followed him, and the dark-haired doctor shook hands and listened patiently to his words. The words made no sense at all, but Dr. Gordon made a suitable reply, and left Jerry in the hall while he went in to see Wee.

He came out after a long time, and advised Jerry to go to the Harvard Club for a swim, shave, shine, smoke, and breakfast. "There is no hurry," he said. "It will be several hours more."

Jerry instantly refused to go away. An obituary notice had formed itself in his mind, while Dr. Gordon was speaking.

DIED — Suddenly, at Miss Macmillan's Hospital on West 57th Street, Mrs. J. McCoy, while Mr. J. McCoy was having a swim, shave, shine, smoke, and breakfast at the Harvard Club.

He continued to oscillate between the hospital and the sidewalk. He came in, at short intervals, for talks with Miss Macmillan and her staff. The talks were short; the nurses seemed to be very busy, very distrait. One of them told him languidly that Mrs. McCoy was in very good condition, according to Dr. Gordon. Jerry hugged that scrap of information for a long time. Why had he ever been cross with Wee? Why had he ever said selfish, heartless things to her? He thought of the hidden lane in Concord. His eyes filled with hopeless tears. He knew how Wee must be suffering now.

They let him see her at ten o'clock. She was in bed upstairs, in a small white room. She had on a very pretty new pink negligee, trimmed with mari-bou. Her eyes met his, and there was a smile in them — a tortured, dauntless smile.

"I'll fight and die for dear old Rutgers!" she said. "Was n't that the favorite slogan of the Harvard football team?"

"It was," said Jerry. "Oh, my dear! Oh, my dear!"

He went out soon after that. A doctor in a short white coat practically pushed him out. That was the anæsthetist, the nurse told him.

Dr. Gordon had gone to his house, presumably for a shave, shine, smoke, and breakfast. Jerry went down and forced himself to read an old magazine straight through from the advertisement inside the front cover to the printer's name and address on the back.

It was not until eleven o'clock that he remembered that one of his duties, in fact his only duty, was to call up Aunt Carrie on the long-distance telephone. He shouted and roared to her for many minutes that Wee was in splendid condition and that everything was going most favorably. He heard Wee laugh faintly when these words came to her through the door of her room. He heard Wee's nurse say, "Quite the little optimist, is n't he?"

He became aware that he was simply an outsider; he became aware that he could n't help Wee; he became aware that everything he did was either comically futile or tragically unnecessary — or both.

At half-past two that afternoon Wee's baby was born.

She lay flat on her back, with triumph in her eyes and a smile on her lips. The baby was incredibly small, but he had a large, scowling, red face. He looked like a Roman emperor of the most depraved and cruel sort — Caligula, or Nero. But there he was — safely born. And there, Jerry could not help thinking, was a million dollars out of Uncle Roger's treasure chest.

He walked away from the hospital with his head in the air. He forgot Uncle Roger. He remembered only that Wee had come bravely and smilingly through. He was so transported that he could hear or see nothing. But Isidor Slutsky, still parked in his cab across the street from Miss Macmillan's, made him hear at last.

"Say, mister," he shouted, running up after Jerry and tapping him on the back, "just how much longer do youse expect me to wait?"

Jerry felt through all his pockets. He had had no money in his pocket at five o'clock in the morning, and he had no money now.

XIX

THE CALL OF THE MILD

"SOMETIMES I wonder," said Wee, "if a penthouse is the very best place to bring up children."

"If that horse-faced English nurse drops little Terry over the battlements," Jerry said savagely, "I'll throw her after him before she knows what hit her."

"Battlements!"

"They ought to be battlements. Instead they're just concrete railings, so low I'm afraid I'll fall over myself. Why can't they give us big, high parapets, with arrow slits and everything?"

"Fire restrictions," said Wee. "Some silly law says the battlements can be only four feet high, I believe. I'm afraid of falling off, myself. But when you speak of Miss Cain dropping darling little Terence over the edge, it makes me positively ill."

"Darling little Terence must learn to take risks. He's a New York boy, you know."

"I wonder!"

"You mean to suggest that he is n't a New York boy? Of course he is. He's as small as a peanut, and he wears a preemy, but he'll learn to dodge

automobiles while he's still creeping. He'll shake a cocktail while Boston babies are still shaking their rattles. And he'll probably start immediately to make wise-cracks in the curious language of New York — the language I can never learn."

"I can't learn it either," said Wee.

"You can't? Why, you're the regular, hundred per cent, guaranteed, blown-in-the-bottle New Yorker."

"I am not. Where'd you get that abominable word 'preemy'?"

"From Miss Cain, of course. She says it's the usual name for special jackets for premature babies."

"Terry is n't premature!"

"Only a little previous," Jerry said. "His coat is a preevy. But who can argue with Miss Cain? I notice *you* can't tell her anything."

Wee closed her eyes. Even the mild and thoroughly familiar exercise of arguing with Jerry fatigued her.

"I love you, Jerry," she said. "If I felt just a little stronger, I'd get up off this sofa and kiss you. How hot it is! I did n't know New York could be so hot in May!"

"You are regretting," he said, softly, "the sturdy east wind from Boston Harbor. Don't you miss it?"

"I'll be darned if I don't," said Wee.

She opened her eyes and looked up at the shiny aluminum ceiling. It was breathlessly hot in the

cork-walled room; but if the windows were opened on the southwest side, the hot gale blowing from New Jersey and West Virginia and Arkansas would sweep like a sirocco through the room.

"It's time to go away somewhere," said Wee.

"To Kiel, Germany?" Jerry asked.

"You mean, about the yacht I wanted?"

"Yes. Mr. Galley called up this morning to say that the owner has come down twenty thousand marks."

"Very good of him," said Wee, languidly.

"But you're in no shape to sail across the Atlantic," Jerry went on. "I don't suppose that even you would consider it a suitable excursion for a baby less than five weeks old."

"Why not?" said Wee, sitting up. "He's got the right blood in him on his mother's side. There were babies as young as he is on the Mayflower. Yes, and younger."

"Transatlantic sailing may be all right for dashing Puritan babies," Jerry remarked. "But half of Terry, you know, is plodding, unimaginative Celt."

Wee pulled her damp tea gown away from her shoulder.

"Are n't we the queerest couple in the world?" she said. "If we met ourselves in a book, we'd say we were absolutely impossible."

"We are n't in a book," said Jerry. "We're

in a penthouse on East Eighty-first Street, New York. And you're an adventurous, devil-may-care Puritan girl—and I'm a stolid, phlegmatic Irishman. You're the star of every social circle into which you project yourself — except the Emery family, to be sure."

"I *like* the Emery family," said Wee.

"For the love of heaven, when did you change your mind?"

"Oh," said Wee, "I had time to think of a lot of things while I was flat on my back. Jerry, you were right about so many things—and I was so very, very wrong."

"Wee."

"Yes."

"I adore you — and you are *never* wrong."

She laughed softly.

"We've had two nice rides together, Jerry. Once when we went to Concord for the first time, and once when —"

"When we drove to Newburyport after the wedding?"

"No," said Wee. "I meant our ride to Miss Macmillan's in the night-hawk cab."

"You were the bravest thing I ever saw. Three o'clock in the morning courage — that's what you showed! It's the rarest kind."

"For men, maybe. But every woman has plenty of it," Wee said. "Having a baby is nothing —"

nothing at all." With a flash of her old gay spirit she sang the last two lines of Joseph Alger's immortal song:—

"What we need is not birth control,
But controlling them after they're born!"

There was a pause.

"It's bringing up babies that worries me," she said. "Jerry, do you think the air is good in Central Park where all those nurse girls sit with children all day long?"

"Carbon monoxide is the best gas for babies. Children cry for it. It comes out of automobiles, and sweeps across the park in great life-giving clouds."

"I was right," Wee said. "It's time to go somewhere. Jerry, if anyone asked me—for two cents I'd go home!"

"To-night," said Jerry, "we are celebrating your return to society. We are going to a wonderful new night club Boxy Keck has discovered. A black and tan. You'll be delighted, Wee."

"Yes, I suppose I said I'd be delighted," said Wee.

Her return to society would be celebrated by a party at a black and tan. Trust Boxy Keck for that. He and Major Steele-Bright had been prowling around the penthouse for days, looking very much pleased.

"In fact," Jerry said, "I don't believe they resent

your baby a bit, now that he's safely parked with Miss Cain."

Boxy Keck arrived ahead of time, for a cocktail before dinner and the theatre. One does not go to the Club Afro-Americaine till very late. His little pink eyes registered extreme satisfaction in the fact that life would go on exactly as it did before this annoying interlude.

At precisely the same moment that Wee was worrying about the low parapets around the penthouse and the poisonous exhaust fumes in Central Park, Caleb Spinney locked his roll-top desk in Boston, put on his Mackinaw straw hat, and prepared to leave his office.

Before he left the outer room, where his bond salesmen sat, he stopped for a second at George Hamill's desk.

"What was that remark you made about Mrs. McCoy?" he asked. "'The thing you said after you went to her housewarming in New York.'"

"I don't remember," said George, blinking.

"I think *I* do," said Caleb, precisely. "I think you said her house was swarming with toadies, and knee-deep in champagne."

"I may have used some such expression."

Caleb passed on, without a farewell. Small politenesses, to him, were superfluous. The only thing that counted was the matter in hand. He walked

firmly, but without needless haste, to his apartment on Mount Vernon Street, bowing his unsmiling and almost imperceptible bow to friends whom he met.

In the solemn Boston fashion, they gave almost invisible nods of their heads in return.

Caleb packed a small alligator-skin grip, putting in a nightshirt, razor, toothbrush, and change of linen for next morning. But then, realizing that he might need full armor for his battle, he transferred these things to a suitcase and put in his evening clothes. He saved one dollar by buying a ticket on the 5.03 P. M. train, rather than the Merchants' Limited. He sat in his seat very quietly, paying no attention to his fellow passengers or to the copy of the Boston News Bureau he had brought from the office. Few crusaders have looked as unmoved as he did. His face was mask-like behind his horn-rimmed glasses. But, like other Puritans before him, Caleb Spinney was going on a crusade.

He was not imaginative, and no enterprise of his needed a touch of dissimulation to give it savor. But this was the first time in all his well-ordered life that he had ever left his office and his home without saying where he was bound.

All his life Caleb Spinney had felt a strange sense of responsibility for Wee. The fact that his relation with her had never been more than friendly made no difference. Under no conceivable circumstances could he have been called romantic or

passionate. But he knew his mind. He had determined to rescue Wee from the life she was leading. He knew all about it. George Hamill's words, and two or three letters from Lily Damfreville, had given him a vivid picture of Wee's extravagance.

Nobody in the train gave him more than a passing glance. His car was full of other impassive Bostonians, on pleasure bent. But not a single passenger on the 5.03 train that day could guess that this middle-aged young man, in the Mackinaw straw hat and pepper-and-salt suit, was bound on the most adventurous business of his life.

Caleb Spinney was pitting himself against the whole of New York. Caleb Spinney against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Caleb Spinney against all the pomps and vanities of Manhattan. Boston's ambassador! A Puritan on crusade!

He walked from the terminal to the Harvard Club and went straight to the dressing room on the sixth floor. From there he called Wee's house. She was not at home. In flat, firm tones he persuaded her butler that he was a friend from Boston and wanted to join Mr. and Mrs. McCoy that evening.

"Mr. and Mrs. McCoy are at the theatre with friends," the man said. "Afterward they are expecting to go to the Club Afro-Americaine."

"I will go there," said Caleb Spinney. His blood was up; the same blood that had hurled the British

regulars twice from the ramparts of Bunker Hill. He put on his dinner clothes, blessing the inspiration that had led him to bring them. Without this badge of profligacy he could not be admitted to the Club Afro-Americaine. Into his shirt front he put three chaste little gold studs. He breathed on his large round glasses, and polished them, and parted his tan-colored hair in the middle. Then, placing his pigskin coin purse in his trouser pocket, he walked determinedly out of the Harvard Club and took a bus, not a taxi, uptown.

It was dark in the black and tan, and the dark skins of its dancers made it more sombre still. Their clothes and jewels flashed through the murk. Caleb Spinney wished that the odor were not so piercing. It was an odor of mingled sweat and musk that stung his nostrils, and made him cough, very precisely, behind his hand.

He ordered poached eggs, and sat silently beside the wall, waiting for Wee to come in. It was long past midnight when her party arrived. He had given up trying to disguise the smell of the place by drawing cigarette smoke deeply into his nose. The music was piercing, too. It had rhythm, and it had a wild, barbaric vigor that beat into Caleb's brain. It did not inspire him to dance, however. He sat very silently, staring through his glasses at Wee.

She saw him, after a long time.

And somehow, in that crowded, smelly, shrieking room, she knew that Boston's one clear call had come. She knew that Caleb was a messenger from home. And she turned white, for a moment, and clutched the edge of her table; and Jerry thought she was feeling ill, and tried to persuade her to go home.

She refused, and sat staring across the room at Caleb, just as steadily and unsmilingly as he stared at her. Bostonians are chary of impulsive greetings; they look at one another long and well, before they risk the informality of a bow. And Wee, despite all her old desire to be a New Yorker, was a Bostonian again in that curious moment—a girl once more in Boston, staring at a Boston man.

Then Caleb stood up, and pushed a dusky dancer out of the way, and came across the smoke-filled, swarming room to Wee; and, for the first time since they were small children, he used her given name.

"Chastity," he said, "come with me."

She stood up like a woman in a daze and gave him her hand.

"Good evening, Mr. Spinney," said Jerry feebly.

Caleb paid no attention to him. He paid no attention to the rest of Wee's party. Boxy Keck half bowed. Caleb cut him flat. Still holding Wee's hand, he led her out of the room and up the stairs into the cleaner air of Ninety-eighth Street.

There was silence at the table. Boxy Keck looked frightened. Alice Thorpley's drawling voice broke the silence at last.

"Who is that man, Jerry? He has run away with your wife."

"I know he has," snapped Jerry. "He's my boss—that's who he is."

"Beastly jolly!"

Jerry turned angrily toward the Major.

"Jolly beastly, I mean," said Major Steele-Bright, hastily.

Outside, on the sidewalk, Caleb turned his face to the east. There was a faint glow of dawn in the sky. A night-hawk taxi stood at the curb. Caleb looked at the taxi, and then at his silver watch.

"Time enough to walk," he said, in his flat voice.

"Caleb, where are we walking to?"

"Subway."

She took his arm as he walked with swinging strides to the subway entrance, three long blocks. She had been tired in the smoky cabaret, but the cool air revived her and she forgot how her feet had ached when she danced with Boxy Keck.

"Where are we going in the subway, Caleb?"

"Grand Central. Milk train to Boston."

He said it masterfully. She trotted along beside him as obediently as if she had been a small child. She was glad that he had mapped out so firm, so precise a plan.

"What about Jerry?" she asked, at last.

"He can come when he's ready," Caleb grunted.

"Pay the check, and follow us, with the baby, to Boston. You have spent the first million, have n't you?"

"Not quite," Wee said, timidly. "I think — I think I've got the fare to Boston in my bag, but if not, you'll have to lend it to me, Caleb."

"Very well."

He walked briskly down the subway steps, and took two nickels out of his coin purse. There was a long wait for a train. When one came at last, he preceded Wee through the door, shoved a reveler out of the way, and found her a seat. The car was full of strange early birds going to work, and stranger night birds reeling to their beds.

There are no Pullman cars on the milk train. Caleb found a seat for Wee and himself in a day coach. They talked little; Wee put her head against his shoulder, and slept peacefully from Stamford to New London. Then she woke, refreshed.

Caleb was asleep. He snored a little, in a methodical sort of way. She looked at his horn-rimmed glasses, pushed far up his forehead. She wondered if he always slept in them. His shawl-collar tuxedo looked wonderfully respectable, in contrast with her tousled evening frock. She pulled her cloak around her, wishing it were a coat, and that she had a hat.

New Haven! Caleb woke up, went out on the platform, and returned with coffee in paper cups and dusty chicken sandwiches.

"Breakfast," he said.

Wee revived more and more.

"Caleb," she said, "I feel just as if I were eloping with you."

"You are," said Caleb grimly, "and with something bigger than me."

"What?"

"With Boston. With your own life, your own people, your own way of doing things."

He said no more. All had been said. Not till the train passed New London did Wee speak again. And then it was a remark as brief as his own.

"You're right. Women are fools, Caleb. I'm only worrying about Jerry."

"Jerry's all right."

"Will you give him his job again, Caleb?"

"I will."

Wee looked out, bright-eyed, at the scrub oaks along the track and the little New England frame houses, so dingy and so familiar. The very air seemed different. There was mist in it, and a rawness that made her blink. A new brakeman got on at Providence. He spoke with the accent of home, flattening his *a's*.

All the returning Bostonians who got on at Providence flattened their *a's*.

"How am I going to get to Aunt Carrie's?" she asked, at Back Bay station. "I'm not dressed for the street."

"Taxicab," said Caleb, superbly. "I'll get you a low-rate one from the corner."

He accompanied her in the low-rate cab to the corner of Dartmouth and Marlboro Streets, and then dropped off and set out for his own apartment on foot. They parted casually. They did not even shake hands. But, "I'll never forget this," said Wee. And, "All right," Caleb replied.

Wee walked into Aunt Carrie's bedroom, looking like a bedraggled Cinderella home from the ball.

The old lady was lying in bed. Beside her, in a straight-backed chair, sat her friend Mrs. Joshua Easeman, of Beacon Street.

"I've come back, Aunt Carrie," said Wee.

"High time, too!" was the reply.

"Jerry's got his old job back, with Carr & Daland. He'll probably come over to-day or to-morrow, bringing the baby. Can I have my own room?"

"It's ready for you," Aunt Carrie replied. "Norah put all your things back on the shelves, the moment you were out of the house."

Mrs. Joshua Easeman sat bolt upright, eyes snapping with excitement behind her glasses.

"Welcome home to Boston, Wee," she said. And

then, as soon as she was alone with Mrs. Legg, she drew her chair confidentially nearer the bed.

"I'm glad her husband has got over his foolishness, and is going to settle down here among us. I can't bear to see a Bostonian marrying out of Boston. Dear papa used to say that foreign marriages *never* turn out happily."

THE END

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MARRIED MONEY

by

HARFORD POWEL, Jr

Boston and New York—no two cities are so inherently, so antagonistically different. The contrast supplies the ideal theme for a novelist of Harford Powel's ability.

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How "Wee" Legg becomes the most extravagant of all New York spenders, transplanting her dazed husband into a pent-house "knee-deep in champagne"—how she introduces him to Nevada Finn—how she takes up Long Island aviation—and how the long arm of Boston can reach at last into the rowdiest of Harlem's night clubs—these are only a few of the wittily contrasted incidents in this gay novel. Harford Powel is that rarest of novelists—a satirist without a grouch. In *Married Money* he has a story as native and hilarious as the American wit with which it sparkles.

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